

Sealing the deal

Buying products that have the ADA Seal of Acceptance

Taking care of your teeth is part of staying healthy, which makes choosing your oral health care products important. The shopping aisles are stocked with a variety of toothbrushes, toothpastes and tools to clean between your teeth—not to mention mouthrinses and chewing gums that are meant to help you maintain good oral health.



To narrow the field, why not look for the ADA Seal of Acceptance? The Seal is designed to help you make informed decisions about safe and effective oral health products that you buy off of store shelves.

HOW DO PRODUCTS OBTAIN THE SEAL?

The ADA Seal of Acceptance program is voluntary. To qualify for the Seal, manufacturers must contact the American Dental Association's Council on Scientific Affairs (adaseal@ada.org), the body that administers the Seal Program, and submit information about their products showing that they are safe and effective. The scientists and researchers who make up the Council provide an independent and objective evaluation of the material that companies submit to support their products.

To assist it in its review, the Council calls on consultants from a pool of more than 125 scientists, including experts in dental materials, biology, microbiology, pharmacology, toxicology and chemistry. The Council reviews the company's submission, the ADA consultants' comments and any other related information and determines if the product has met ADA Seal Program criteria for safety and effectiveness. If it does, the product receives the ADA Seal.

Manufacturers of products that bear the Seal have provided the Council with the following:

- a list of ingredients and other pertinent product information;
- objective data from clinical studies, laboratory studies or both that support the product's safety, effectiveness and advertising claims;
- documentation that any tests performed involving people were conducted in strict compliance with ADA guidelines and procedures;

- evidence that manufacturing and laboratory facilities are adequate and properly supervised to ensure purity of the product and consistency in its quality and composition.

Manufacturers also must demonstrate that the product is manufactured in line with the Good Manufacturing Practices established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

When the Seal is awarded, manufacturers agree to allow the Council to review and approve all product packaging, labeling and advertising claims. Manufacturers also must agree to comply with the ADA's standards for accuracy and truthfulness in advertising. This means that any claims made for Seal products have been verified by the ADA.

AFTER THE SEAL IS AWARDED

The ADA Seal typically is awarded for a five-year period.

Whenever the composition of an Accepted product changes, the manufacturer must resubmit the product for review and approval before it can be marketed with the Seal. Any new claims that manufacturers wish to make after a product has been awarded the Seal must be supported first with appropriate studies. As long as a product bears the ADA Seal, it must continue to meet the requirements discussed above.

Because your dentist is familiar with your personal oral health needs and history, he or she is the best person with whom to talk about the products that could be helpful in maintaining or improving your dental health. However, when considered along with your dentist's advice, the ADA Seal of Acceptance can help you wade through your options in the oral health shopping aisles—leading you to products that are safe and effective.

You can find a list of approximately 300 products with the ADA Seal of Acceptance—organized by product, type of product or manufacturer—and detailed information about each of the products by visiting www.mouthhealthy.org/seal, a Web site created by the ADA just for you. ■

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"For the Dental Patient" provides general information on dental treatments to dental patients. It is designed to prompt discussion between dentist and patient about treatment options and does not substitute for the dentist's professional assessment based on the individual patient's needs and desires.