

## The Story of Chewing Gum

The practice of chewing gum has been with us for more than a century. Millions of people all over the world chew billions of sticks of gum every year.

Chewing gum became popular in the United States mostly because of the work of one man, William Wrigley, who for many years was head of the Wrigley Company. Earlier, Thomas Adams first started to experiment with chewing gum in about the year 1870. He made gum softer and more pleasant to chew. But it wasn't until Wrigley entered the business in about 1890 that people everywhere began to learn about chewing gum and to use it widely.

Wrigley liked to do things in a big way. In his first year, he spent more than a million dollars on advertising. For years, there was a large Wrigley's sign in all the streetcars in the United States. People complained that they couldn't go anywhere without seeing Wrigley's name. Wrigley even sent, free of charge, pieces of gum to every person in the telephone books of every city and town in the United States. Finally, he began to advertise that it was good for the health to chew gum, that it calmed the nerves, and that it helped to keep the teeth clean.

He used to send gum, free of charge, to every child in the United States on its second birthday. He hired young women who, in wild, orange-striped dresses, went from city to city in groups of four or five, stood on street corners, and passed out free samples of chewing gum. In this way, each woman gave away thousands of sticks of Wrigley's gum every day. As a result of this continuous advertising, people in the United States began to purchase more and more chewing gum.

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