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BEYOND SQUEEZE TUBES: THE CHEWABLE HERBAL TOOTH FOAMING TABLET TREND IN ORAL HYGIENE- A CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Maintaining optimal oral hygiene and preventing dental issues are pivotal aspects of overall health. In recent times, there has been a growing inclination towards natural and herbal alternatives to traditional toothpaste formulations. Toothpaste tubes pose a significant environmental challenge due to their composition of polymers and metal coatings, making recycling difficult. It takes 500 years for a toothpaste tube to biodegrade in a landfill, and the polyethylene in packaging can release carcinogens, contributing to health risks. To address this, individuals can adopt strategies such as reducing consumption, reusing containers, and recycling whenever possible to mitigate environmental impact and greenhouse gas emissions. Herbal tooth foaming tablets offer an eco-friendly alternative to conventional toothpaste tubes, reducing plastic waste. They are cost-effective and enhance oral health while promoting environmental sustainability. The tooth foaming tablet operates with precision, eradicating plaque, banishing bad breath, and bestowing a revitalizing sensation, thus enhancing overall mouth cleanliness and freshness. This innovative product stands as a potential game-changer, poised to revolutionize daily oral care rituals. By offering a natural and convenient alternative to traditional toothpaste formulations, the tooth foaming tablet seamlessly aligns with evolving consumer preferences for holistic oral care experiences.

KEYWORDS: Tooth foaming tablet, Tooth paste tablet, oral hygiene, herbal ingredients, wet granulation, direct compression.

INTRODUCTION

Tooth foaming tablets are an innovative and ecoconscious alternative to conventional toothpaste. These tablets, crafted without water, offer a compelling choice for those prioritizing natural ingredients and seeking to reduce or eliminate preservatives.^[1] Pressed into convenient pill-like forms, they offer ease of use and storage, presenting a modern solution for sustainable oral care routines. Being water free, these tablets contain minimal preservatives, drawing appeal from those embracing the beauty of simplicity.^[2] Embracing ecoconsciousness, their formulation champions sustainability by reducing environmental impact. They are also famous as toothpaste tablets and tooth tablets. They offer a modern twist on oral care, catering to discerning preferences. While the experience may vary from traditional toothpaste, the convenience and potential eco-friendliness speak volumes to mindful consumers where innovation meets sustainability for a brighter, fresher smile.



Advantages

1. Longer Shelf life: Toothpaste tablets often have a longer shelf life compared to traditional toothpaste. The absence of water in their formulation minimizes the risk of bacterial growth and degradation of the product over time. This longer shelf life ensures that the tablets remain effective and safe for use even if not used for an extended period, reducing the

frequency of replacements and contributing to overall product sustainability.^[3]

- 2. Innovative flavors and options: Toothpaste tablets come in a variety of innovative flavors. This provides users with a more personalized and enjoyable oral care experience.^[4] From mint to fruity flavors, and even options for sensitive teeth or whitening, the diverse range of choices caters to different preferences and specific oral health needs.
- 3. No liquids, No mess: Traditional toothpaste tubes can sometimes lead to messy bathroom situations due to accidental squeezing or mishandling. Tooth foaming tablets eliminate this issue entirely, as they are solid and not prone to spillage. The absence of liquids makes them convenient for use in any setting, including shared bathrooms, without the worry of accidental messes.
- 4. No risk of drying out: Unlike traditional toothpaste tubes that can dry out over time, tooth foaming tablets maintain their integrity and effectiveness until used. The solid form protects the active ingredients from exposure to air, ensuring that each tablet provides the intended oral care benefits.^[5] This feature adds to the convenience and reliability of tooth foaming tablets for long-term use.
- 5. Suitable for all ages: Tooth foaming tablets are generally suitable for all age groups, including children above 6 years and the elderly. The controlled dosage and solid form make them easy to handle, reducing the risk of overuse, especially for young children. The variety of flavors also makes oral care more appealing to children, potentially encouraging better dental hygiene habits from an early age.^[6]
- 6. Easy to use: Using tooth foaming tablets is straightforward and involves minimal effort. Simply chew, brush, and rinse there's no need to squeeze and handle a tube. This simplicity makes toothpaste tablets an accessible and user-friendly option for individuals with physical limitations or conditions that may make traditional toothpaste tubes challenging to use.^[3]

Disadvantages

- 1. Hygroscopic nature: Tooth foaming tablets have a hygroscopic nature, meaning they tend to absorb moisture from the environment. This makes it crucial to store them in specific conditions to prevent them from becoming soft or sticky, potentially affecting their effectiveness and user experience.
- 2. Potential mouth ulcers: There have been reported connections between the flavouring substances used in tooth foaming tablets and the occurrence of mouth ulcers. This could be a concern for individuals with sensitivities or allergies to specific ingredients.
- 3. Not suitable for elderly people with dentures: Elderly individuals with dentures may face challenges using toothpaste tablets, as the solid form may not be suitable for denture cleaning.^[7]

4. Comparatively expensive: Tooth foaming tablets are noted to be more expensive compared to traditional tubes on the market. This could be a barrier for cost-conscious consumers who are accustomed to the affordability of conventional toothpaste.^[8]

Effectiveness of Tooth Foaming Tablets

- 1. Plaque Removal: Research indicates that tooth foaming tablets are as effective as traditional toothpaste in diminishing plaque accumulation. A 2022 study featured in the International Journal of Preventive and Public Health Dentistry observed significant reductions in plaque scores for both tablets and toothpaste, revealing no substantial variance between the two.^[8]
- 2. Fluoride and Enamel Health: The inclusion of fluoride in numerous tooth foaming tablet brands implies potential benefits while comparing with conventional toothpaste concerning enamel fortification and cavity prevention. It's also noted that certain tablet brands may lack fluoride. In such instances, consulting a dentist for guidance on supplementary fluoride requirements becomes imperative.^[9]
- 3. Fresh Breath: Tooth foaming tablets commonly incorporate flavouring agents such as peppermint or spearmint to impart a refreshing sensation. While long-term efficacy in addressing halitosis compared to toothpaste remains largely unexplored in studies, initial indications suggest a comparable ability to deliver breath-freshening effects.^[10]

Environmental Benefits

One of the key advantages of tooth foaming tablets is their lower environmental impact compared to traditional toothpaste. Here's how they contribute to sustainability:

- 1. Reduced Plastic Waste: Toothpaste tubes are typically made from plastic, which generates significant waste. Tooth foaming tablets come in small, lightweight containers, often made from recycled materials or cardboard, significantly reducing plastic consumption.^[11]
- 2. Lower Carbon Footprint: The production and transportation of traditional toothpaste contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. The smaller packaging and lighter weight of tooth foaming tablets lead to a lower carbon footprint throughout their lifecycle.^[12]
- 3. Water Conservation: Traditional toothpaste production requires water. The solid format of tooth foaming tablets eliminates the need for water during their production process.^[13]

Storage Guidelines for Tooth Foaming Tablets

Tooth foaming tablet is sensitive to humidity. It is important to store it in an airtight metal or glass box when not in use. to ensure the optimal performance and longevity.

1. Cool and dry environment: Tooth foaming tablets should be stored in a cool and dry place. Avoid exposure to high temperatures or humidity, as excessive moisture can compromise the integrity of the tablets. $\ensuremath{^{[14]}}$

- 2. Avoid direct sunlight: The tooth foaming tablets is always protected from direct sunlight. Prolonged exposure to sunlight can potentially affect the composition and efficacy. Always keep them in a shaded area to maintain their quality.^[15]
- 3. Protect from excessive moisture: Moisture can lead to the breakdown of the tablet's structure and impact its effectiveness. Store the tablets in a moisture-free environment and consider using airtight containers to prevent exposure to dampness.^[16]
- 4. Temperature range: Keep the tooth foaming tablets within the recommended temperature range of 20-25 degrees Celsius (68-77 degrees Fahrenheit). Extreme temperatures can alter the consistency and performance of the tablets, so maintaining a moderate temperature is crucial.^[17]

Method of using tooth foaming tablets

To effectively clean the teeth, consider using tooth foaming tablets as directed by the dentist or personal preference. Each tablet typically equals one brushing session, but adjust the number according to your needs. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions, especially regarding pre-rinses or post-rinses.

To use the tablets, simply place one in your mouth and chew until it forms a creamy paste.^[18] When saliva activates it, a slight foaming effect will occur. Then, brush your teeth for the recommended 2 minutes with a wet toothbrush. Spit out the foam afterwards.

It's advisable to incorporate this routine at least twice daily, ideally after meals or in the morning and night. If supervising children, ensure they're capable of using the tablets safely. Keep them out of reach of children under 6 years old, and seek medical assistance if accidentally swallowed.

Essential ingredients of a Tooth foaming Tablet

- 1. Sweetening agents: Sweetening agents are typically incorporated to enhance the palatability of products, masking the taste of other ingredients and thereby making brushing more enjoyable. They are added in quantities adequate to adjust the flavor of the chewed tablet, ranging preferably from about 0.01% to about 10% by weight relative to the tablet. Examples of sweetening agents encompass Xylitol, Sorbitol, Stevia, neotame, Sucralose, Acesulfame K, Saccharin(s), Cyclamates, Aspartame, Licorice root, Glycyrrhizin extract, among others.^[19]
- 2. Binding Agents: Binding agents are essential to bind the constituents of the tooth foaming tablet, providing it with a cohesive structure. Common binders include xanthan gum, cellulose gum, and carrageenan, as well as polyols like mannitol, calcium phosphate, calcium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium carbonate, sodium phosphate, potassium phosphate, potassium carbonate,

polyethylene glycol, and esters. These components also contribute to the smooth texture of the toothpaste upon dissolution into a paste. A toothpaste tablet must contain a tablet binder in an amount adequate for tablet formation, typically ranging from about 10% to about 90% by weight relative to the tablet.^[20]

- **3.** Thickening agents: These substances provide an appropriate consistency to the tooth foaming pill when dissolved in the mouth. There are different types of thickening agents, like pregelatinized starch, gums such as agar, locust bean gum, guar gum, carrageenan, alginate, xanthan, dextran, and cellulose derivatives like sodium carboxymethyl cellulose.^[21]
- 4. Fluoride: It is a vital component in tooth foaming tablets, safeguarding teeth from decay by fortifying developing enamel and slowing down bacterial acid production caused by plaque. It shields teeth against demineralization, a process where acid produced by bacteria combines with sugar to erode tooth enamel. Dental fluoride concentrations vary from 0.01% to 5% by weight. Nevertheless, certain toothpaste tablets cater to those who prefer fluoride-free options. Examples of fluoride types include Sodium fluoride and Calcium fluoride.^[22]
- **5. Abrasives:** Toothpaste tablets often contain gentle abrasives such as calcium carbonate, calcium phosphate, dehydrated silica, hydrated silica, Aluminium hydroxide, calcium pyrophosphate, sodium metaphosphate, magnesium carbonate and alumna which assist in eliminating plaque and stains from teeth. These agents are pivotal for maintaining oral hygiene and ensuring teeth cleanliness. The inclusion of silica abrasive typically ranges from approximately 0.1% to about 15% by weight, relative to the tablet's weight, further emphasizing their crucial role in oral care.^[23]
- Foaming agent: Foaming agents are responsible for 6. the foaming in toothpaste tablet. The functions of foaming agents are to disperse the tooth foaming tablets throughout the oral cavity in order to enhance the cleaning effect and acting as a surfactant. Surfactants reduce surface tension and increase the rate of dissolution of the tablet when it is in contact with saliva, e.g.: Sodium lauryl sulfate, Polyoxymethylene stearates, sodium dodecyl sulfate, polyoxymethylene sorbitan acid esters. polyoxyethylene stearates.
- **7.** Therapeutic agents: Among some of important therapeutic agents, antimicrobial approaches refer to the substances that are used to treat or prevent periodontal diseases of the soft tissues of the oral cavity. Triclosan, cetylpyridinium etc. control dental plaque. Apart from antimicrobials, there are other therapeutic agents such as anticaries, antibacterial agents, anti- inflammatory agents, antiseptic agents.^[24]

- 8. Flavoring agents: Tooth foaming tablets come in a variety of flavors to make brushing more enjoyable, to give acceptable taste, to enhance their flavor and usually add aroma. Flavoring agents can include natural or artificial ingredients, such as mint (Peppermint, Spearmint, Aqua mint), menthol, cinnamon and fruit extracts.^[25]
- **9.** Lubricants: Lubricants are utilized when making tablets to lessen the friction between the die wall and granulation during compression, for the easy removal of tablets from the die, to increase the particle density. to increase the granular powder's flow characteristics and to stop grains from adhering to the dies and punches. Examples include talc, PEG4000, magnesium stearate, calcium stearate, stearic acid, liquid paraffin, maize starch, liquid colloidal silicon dioxide etc.^[26]
- 10. Fillers: These are inert, fine solids that are combined with drugs to increase the weight of the tablet to a predetermined minimum level. Optimal characteristics of diluents includes excellent compressibility and compact ability, good flow characteristics, decent solubility, reduced hygroscopicity and high disintegration capacity. Some of the examples are anhydrous lactose, lactose monohydrate, spray-dried lactose, starch, dibasic calcium phosphate, microcrystalline cellulose (MCC), Mannitol, Sorbitol, Xylitol, Calcium and Magnesium Carbonates, Calcium Sulfate and Magnesium Trisilicate.^[27]
- **11. Glidants**: Glidants like colloidal silicon and talc are included to improve flow properties of granules.
- **12. Other ingredients:** It usually contains a buffer e.g. Cranberry extract in an amount sufficient to adjust the pH when dissolved in the mouth in an amount ranging from 0.1% to about 10% by weight, based on the weight of the tablet. They often contain cream of tartar, a common household bleach-alternative made from tartaric acid. Some tooth foaming tablets may also contain additional ingredients, such as enzymes, some herbal extracts, or essential oils, to provide additional benefits such as freshening breath or reducing inflammation.

13. Herbal Ingredients

Herbal ingredients play a significant role in dental care, offering natural remedies for various oral issues:

- **Clove:** The oil isolated from clove (*Eugenia caryophyllus*) from the Myrtaceae family acts as a potent natural antibiotic against tooth infections. Its antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic properties alleviate pain and inflammation associated with such infections.^[28]
- **Neem**: The leaves and twigs of Neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*) from the Meliaceae family is a renowned herbal remedy in Ayurveda, Distinguished for its anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant attributes. It enhances dental care routines due to its versatile nature.^[29]

- **Guava**: The leaves of Guava (*Psidium guajava*) from the Myrtaceae family have historically served oral hygiene with their antibacterial and antimicrobial properties. They effectively control plaque, alleviate gum inflammation, and offer analgesic effects.^[30]
- **Charcoal**: Charcoal, particularly activated charcoal, aids in removing surface stains from teeth. Its mild abrasive nature and ability to absorb stains provide a natural whitening effect.^[31]
- **Cinnamon**: *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* and *Cinnamomum cassia*, members of the Lauraceae family) has a long-standing reputation in tropical medicine for its antimicrobial, antifungal, and anti-inflammatory properties, particularly in addressing toothache.^[32]
- **Peppermint:** The stem, leaves, and flowers of *Mentha piperita* L. from the Labiatae family, boasts natural anti-inflammatory and antibacterial qualities. Its application helps to suppress bacterial growth in the oral cavity, thereby preventing infections.^[33]
- **Mango:** The mango tree (*Mangifera indica*, part of the Anacardiaceae family) utilizes various components such as leaves, stems, twigs, and extracts in diverse dental formulations. Mangiferin, an important compound found in mango leaves, exhibits significant antibacterial properties against specific strains of Pneumococci, Streptococci, Staphylococci, and Lactobacillus acidophilus, along with antiplaque and anticytotoxic activities.^[34]
- **Sesame:** The seeds of the plant, *Sesamum indicum*, belonging to the Pedaliaceae family are known for their ability to strengthen teeth and aid in addressing receding gums, whether white or brown in colour.
- **Bamboo** has emerged as a popular choice for herbal oral care, notably through the widespread adoption of bamboo toothbrushes. Renowned for their biodegradability, these toothbrushes are crafted from bamboo, with bristles typically composed of nylon fibres or other natural materials infused with activated charcoal. They prove equally effective as plastic toothbrushes in maintaining dental hygiene, making them one of the most impactful herbal products for oral care.^[35]
- **Miswak**: The teeth-cleaning twig derived from the *Salvadora persica* tree, possesses antibacterial properties that aid in controlling dental plaque formation and activity. Moreover, Miswak sticks serve as effective, affordable, readily available, and naturally endowed alternatives for teeth cleaning, offering numerous medicinal benefits.^[36]
- **Ginger:** Ginger is derived from the dried rhizomes of *Zingiber officinale* Roscoe from the Zingiberaceae family. It offers multifaceted benefits for oral health. It aids in cavity prevention, plaque removal, gum tissue strengthening, and inflammation prevention.^[37]
- **Basil**: This plant is scientifically known as *Ocimum* sanctum or *Ocimum tenuiflorum* and part of the Lamiaceae family, commonly referred to as Tulsi,

plays a significant role in oral and periodontal health maintenance. It serves as a natural remedy for teeth strengthening and whitening.^[38]

- **Spilanthes**: It is characterized by the flowers of the *Spilanthes acmella* plant from the Asteraceae family, earns the moniker "toothache plant" due to its numbing and pain-relieving properties. It has been historically utilized for toothache relief and dental applications.^[39]
- **Brahmi**: Brahmi is derived from the fresh or dried herb of *Centella asiatica* (L.), also known as *Hydrocotyl asiatica* Linn., belonging to the Umbelliferae family, aids in preventing tooth decay and promoting the health of teeth and gums.^[40]
- **Menthol, Eucalyptol, or Tea tree oil** are herbal oils known for their anti-inflammatory properties, aiding in reducing gum inflammation and eliminating oral bacteria.
- **Stevia**: Stevia is extracted from the leaves of the *Stevia rebaudiana* plant from the Asteraceae family, serves as a natural alternative antibacterial agent and remedy for preventing dental caries, offering a sweet sugar substitute.^[41]
- **Amla**: It consist of fresh and dried fruits of *Phyllanthus emblica* L. tree of the Euphorbiaceae family, plays a vital role in dental health due to its potent antibacterial and astringent properties, contributing to oral hygiene.^[42]
- **Liquorice**: It is sourced from the subterranean parts of *Glycyrrhiza glabra* Linn. and other Glycyrrhiza species from the Leguminosae family, is a natural antimicrobial agent that inhibits cavity-causing bacteria growth, promoting oral health.^[43]
- **Pellitory**: It is also known as *Anacyclus pyrethrum* or Akarkara, is a significant medicinal plant from the Asteraceae family. It serves as a natural remedy for dental issues such as toothache and gum infections, offering therapeutic benefits.^[44]

Method of Preparation of tooth foaming tablets

The tooth foaming tablet can be prepared by any of the methods useful for forming conventional tablets. These conventional methods include granulating methods, either wet or dry granulating method and direct compression methods. Depending on the properties of the ingredients (e.g., polishing agents, tableting carriers, flavors, coloring agents etc.) to be formulated into granules, one method may provide a more favorable end product over the other method. Herbal toothpaste tablets formulated using direct compression technique are usually carried out by weighing all the ingredients present in the formulation table accurately and blended to form homogenous mixture. These were passed through the sieve to get uniformed size particle. These are then compressed by direct compression method using 6-mm bi-concave punches on a Double Rotary Tablet Compression Machine. Direct compression without granulation step may be chosen as long as producing non-gritty tablets does not cause capping.^[45]

EVALUATION OF TOOTH FOAMING TABLETS

Evaluation of tooth foaming tablets require two stages viz, pre-compression and post compression evaluation techniques.^[46]

A. Pre-compression Evaluation techniques

Granules and powders' flowability properties were assessed prior to compression using various parameters, including the flow rate, bulk density, tap density, compressibility index (Carr's index), angle of repose, Hausner's ratio and percentage porosity.

B. Post compression evaluation techniques

The formulated Tooth foaming tablets are evaluated by post compression evaluation techniques like pH, Weight variation, hardness, friability, wetting ability, foamability and moisture uptake studies.

Weight variation

Weight variation was done to check whether different batches of tablets have content uniformity. Weighed 20 tablets individually, calculated the average weight, and compared the individual tablet weight to average. If not more than two tablets are outside the percentage limit and none of the tablets differ by more than two times the Percentage limit, the tablets meet the test.

Hardness

The hardness of the tablet was evaluated by using a Monsanto hardness tester. It consists of a barrel containing a compressible spring held between two plungers. A lower plunger was placed in close contact with the tablet and a zero reading was taken. By turning a threaded bolt, the upper plunger was forced against a spring until the tablet fractures. The force of fracture was recorded. Ten tablets of each formulation were evaluated.

Friability

To assess the friability of each formulation, 20 preweighed tablets are placed in the plastic chamber of the Roche friability test apparatus. The friabilator is then operated for 4 minutes at 25 rpm. Afterward, the tablets are reweighed to determine the percentage of weight loss.

Foamability

The foamability of the product is gauged by adding a tablet into a 100 ml graduated measuring cylinder filled with the appropriate amount of distilled water. The initial volume is recorded, followed by 10 shakes of the measuring cylinder. The final volume is then measured after foam production.

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The pH of the solution is evaluated using a pH meter. This is achieved by dissolving 3 tablets in 3 separate beakers, each containing 200 ml of water.

Wetting Ability

The wetting time, or the duration for water to reach the upper surface of the tablet, is determined using a method involving five circular tissue papers (each 10 cm in diameter) placed in a 10 cm diameter petri dish. Ten millilitres of water-soluble dye (such as eosin solution) are added to the petri dish. A tablet is gently positioned on the surface of the tissue paper, and the time taken for water to reach the tablet's upper surface is recorded as the wetting time. Additionally, to measure the water-absorption ratio, the weight of the tablet before placement in the petri dish (*Wb*) is noted. After wetting, the tablet is removed from the petri dish and reweighed (*Wa*). The water-absorption ratio (R) can then be calculated using the following equation:^[47]

$\mathbf{R} = \mathbf{100} \; (\mathbf{Wa} - \mathbf{Wb}) / \mathbf{Wb}$

Moisture-uptake studies

This study is crucial for understanding the stability of tooth foaming tablets and is conducted to evaluate how well the tablets hold up under specific conditions. Ten tablets were placed in desiccators with calcium chloride at 37°C for 24 hours to simulate a controlled environment. After this initial period, the tablets were weighed and then exposed to 75% relative humidity at room temperature for two weeks. To maintain the required humidity level, saturated sodium chloride solution was placed at the bottom of the desiccators for three days. This ensured consistent environmental conditions for the tablets. Additionally, one tablet without a super disintegrant was kept as a control to measure moisture uptake due to other ingredients. At the end of the experiment, the tablets were weighed again, and any increase in weight was recorded as a percentage. This data helps to understand how well the tablets withstand exposure to moisture over time.^[48]

CONCLUSION

Tooth foaming tablets present a distinct alternative to traditional toothpaste, with several advantages and few disadvantages. These tablets are particularly convenient for travel, being lightweight, compact, and less prone to spills than conventional toothpaste tubes. Additionally, many tooth foaming tablets come in minimal or plasticfree packaging, potentially reducing environmental impact compared to traditional tubes that are often challenging to recycle.

Ensuring the suitability of tooth foaming tablets for individual oral care needs and preferences necessitates a careful examination of their ingredient lists. Some variants contain fluoride for cavity prevention, while others cater to those who prefer fluoride-free or natural alternatives. Effectiveness in terms of cleaning, whitening, or addressing specific oral health concerns may vary between toothpaste and foaming tablets, contingent upon individual preferences and requirements. Before transitioning to tooth foaming tablets, consulting with a dentist is advisable. Dentists can offer personalized guidance based on one's dental health status, helping determine if such tablets align with individual needs. It's vital for consumers to weigh the advantages and disadvantages, considering factors such as taste, storage, compatibility with dentures, and cost, to make an informed decision about incorporating tooth foaming tablets into their oral care routine.

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