

Healthy & Organic living

THE TRUTH BEHIND... Toothpaste

What exactly are you squeezing onto your toothbrush twice a day?

Rachael Glazier takes a closer look...

- * **2006** - the year mining company Rio Tinto began extraction of toothpaste ingredient titanium dioxide in Madagascar. Friends of the Earth says it is undermining local living standards, causing social upheaval and environmental destruction
- * **£758 million** - how much the oral hygiene market was estimated to be worth in 2007. Toothpastes and toothbrushes account for 56.7% of this
- * **16** - the score out of 20 that Green People Vegan Toothpaste received on Ethiscore, the online consumer guide from *Ethical Consumer* magazine in January 2008. It contains no parabens or sodium lauryl sulphates



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The score out of 20 that Procter & Gamble's Crest toothpaste received on Ethiscore in January 2008. Reasons listed include P&G's operations in 19 oppressive regimes



0

- * **200,000** - the number of pounds of materials recycled each year by Tom's of Maine. The tubes are made of aluminium and so can be recycled, which the company will do themselves if there is no facility locally
- * **84** - the percentage stake Colgate-Palmolive has held in Tom's of Maine since 2006, causing a drop in its ethical rating among consumers
- * **0.1%** - the allowed amount of hydrogen peroxide in teeth whitening solutions. There is no legal limit for alternative whitening agent chlorine dioxide, although most insurance companies don't cover its professional use due to insufficient research
- * **1892** - the year that toothpaste was first available in metal tubes. Plastic tubes came into use in the 1980s

- * **7** - the hazard score triclosan, an antibacterial often found in toothpastes, is given by the Cosmetic Safety Database. There are concerns that overuse may lead to development of resistant bacteria which in turn will become harder to eliminate
- * **10%** - the amount of toothpaste left unused in a tube when it's binned. This could be reduced by cutting it open
- * **8** - the hazard score given to sodium fluoride on the Cosmetic Safety Database. An anti-bacterial used to help prevent tooth decay, excess can lead to fluorosis, a mottling of the teeth. Can be poisonous if ingested
- * **1983** - the year that, according to

The amount Mintel predicts the UK oral health market will grow between 2007 and 2012, up to an estimated £923 million in 2012



22%



0ml

The amount of active ingredients in counterfeit Sensodyne tubes traced in 2007 (though they had toxic levels of diethylene glycol)

the Pesticide Action Network, it first became known that the detergent and foaming agent sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS) caused problems including laboured breathing, diarrhoea and severe skin irritation in laboratory animals. SLS can also cause irritations to the mouth

- * **19%** - the proportion of people who stated they simply couldn't be bothered to brush their teeth twice a day
- * **50%** - the number of four- to six-year-olds that swallow the toothpaste instead of spitting out, according to a 1995 study by the Medical College of Georgia School of Dentistry

Sweet teeth

Green People Children's Mandarin Toothpaste
£3.25 for 50ml

They say: Teeth-cleaning's a treat, fruity and naturally sweet. Gentle on delicate teeth and gums, aloe vera and myrrh remove plaque and bacteria, while essential oils of orange and mandarin naturally protect gums. 100% natural with certified organic ingredients.

We say: "Really fruity taste, great for encouraging kids to brush."
www.greenpeople.co.uk Tel: 01403 740 350

