Skin Deep: Chew On This Revolution
Better teeth through chocolate chemistry

By: Cat Wall Aschaffenburg

What if I told you that you could brush your teeth with chocolate and your teeth would be stronger and harder without the use of toxic fluoride? Well, dreams come true: Hello, Theodent™! Theodent™ is an innovative oral care company housed right here in New Orleans in the newly built BioInnovation center downtown.

I was lucky enough to receive a tube of Theodent to try for myself, and the first thing I noticed was how smooth my teeth felt. The taste was delicious, the product didn't sting and my teeth looked shiny. Even my husband noticed my teeth were glossy. Theodent™ has a great flavor and is nontoxic, fluoride-free and good for me.

I recently sat down with New Orleans' own Dr. Arman Sadeghpour, president and CEO of Theodent™. Sadeghpour, who completed his doctoral thesis research and Ph.D. in 2007, focused his research on an extract from cocoa that worked better than fluoride to effectuate a change in the micro-hardness of human enamel.

How was Theodent discovered? The discovery was made purely by accident by my mentor, Dr. Tetsuo Nakamoto, who has his Ph.D. in nutrition from MIT and is also a dentist. It was found while looking at variant molecules of caffeine and their effect on a newborn's enamel structure.

On the box and tube I see the name Rennou and the name Theodent. Theodent™ is named after a certain type of cacao tree or theobroma cacao. It is also named after the extract from cacao-theobromine that was discovered to have a beneficial effect on teeth.

Rennou™ is our proprietary trademark – the “nou” is short for nouvelle, French for “new.” Rennou™ actually renews the enamel surface of the tooth structure. We found this a fitting name for a technology that was discovered in New Orleans or as we know it, La Nouvelle Orleans. Rennou™ is a patented technology that includes an extract from chocolate and other minerals that have been optimized in this proprietary blend to effectuate a change in the size and strength of the unit crystals in human enamel.

Why is it better than fluoride? Rennou™ has a significantly better effect on the microhardness of human enamel. It also works to help prevent enamel erosion. Our collaborator at the American Dental Association has found in his studies that this extract is having almost twice the protective effect than fluoride.

Is it safe? Is it FDA approved? Rennou™ is very safe! In fact it's Generally Recognized As Safe or GRAS by an expert panel of leading toxicologists in the field. GRAS is the FDA's standard by which food additives are approved, so not only is it safe for use in toothpaste, but also if you happen to swallow … it is absolutely not unsafe.

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How does it whiten if there's no peroxide? We use titanium dioxide as a whitener, which really helps to clean the tooth and remove surface proteins and stains from the tooth. It also helps

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Rennou™ penetrate directly to the enamel surface where the real magic can happen upon direct contact.

Tell me more about the mint flavor. “Whitening Crystal Mint” is a very mild, subtle and savory mint, not harsh or burning like traditional commercial toothpastes. We have formulated this mint to soothe the oral cavity and inspire the brusher to, on average, brush from 30-50 seconds longer.

Why? Well this is important to gain the maximum effect of Rennou™. The longer it stays on the teeth, the more time it has for the re-mineralization to occur. We recommend a first brushing with Theodent™ to rinse and completely clean teeth, then we recommend a quick second brush with a fresh application of Theodent™; let the toothpaste stay on the teeth while you go about your day (or while you sleep). This really allows time for the Rennou™ to work directly on the enamel surface of human teeth.

Are there plans to expand? Because the technology comes from chocolate, children (big and small) really want it to taste like chocolate so we are working on a special “chocolate toothpaste” for kids. What do dentists have to say? Dentists love the fact that there’s finally a fluoride alternative in the marketplace. We have several local dentists that have called wanting to carry the product; it’s exciting to so many that there is finally a better way to do things.

Where can someone buy Theodent? Theodent™ Classic is available in the United States exclusively through the website theodent.com and at select Whole Foods Markets, and Theodent 300 (a more concentrated version) is found in select dental and medical offices and exclusively through our website.

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