

Julia Leonard
julia.leo
jbot73@gmail.com
Champlain College

PGC Day 6: Greenest

DIY Tooth Powder:

Toothpaste has always been something very intriguing to me. Every morning and night we put a gooey substance on a stick with bristles that we lather onto our teeth and then spit it back out. I remember growing up with my mom telling me not to swallow it because it was bad! So why do we put it in our mouths in the first place?

When I started my journey into being more environmentally cautious, one of the first things I did was find a toothpaste alternative. This led me to tooth powder. The benefits: it often comes in glass jars (aka no plastic), it's not a liquid so there's no airplane travel limit (aka very portable), it doesn't foam up, it's all natural ingredients, and it doesn't stain everything if it accidentally explodes. Plus, you can make it at home to save even more money!

Something I also learned about when researching different toothpastes/powders was about the abrasivity of certain brands. Measuring a toothpaste's abrasivity is actually necessary for FDA approval. These measurements are given in RDA value or Relative Dentin Abrasivity. However there are lots of other factors like toothbrush size, amount of toothpaste, brushing time, frequency and force of brushing.

For RDA measurements 0-70 is low abrasive, 70-100 is medium, 100-150 is highly abrasive and 150-250 is the harmful limit. Straight baking soda has an RDA of 7, Kid's Crest has a value of 95, and Crest Pro-Health has a score of 189.

Tooth powder is simply a mixture of a few powders that blend to freshen your breath and clean teeth. In fact, most toothpastes use baking soda or calcium carbonate as their main ingredients, both of which are prevalent in the powders.

Most baking sodas are a mixture of baking soda, salt, sage, bentonite clay and a variety of essential oils. All ingredients you can buy pretty cheap, or already have in the house. When I first switched to just baking soda, I needed a container to store it, so I used an old basil jar. Spice jars work really well because you can open on one side and just shake a little bit out onto your brush. Alternatively, you can use a little glass jar.

Questionable things about normal toothpaste:

- The packaging: single use tubes, plastic galore

- The ingredients: fluoride (not all that great for you), titanium dioxide (may be carcinogenic, may damage cells), glycerin (makes toothpaste pasty but lowkey bad), sodium lauryl sulfate (strong bad chemical- makes toothpaste foam which honestly is overrated, artificial sweeteners

DIY TOOTH POWDER

Ingredient- baking soda

Option additions- salt, sage, bentonite clay, calcium powder, essential oils (peppermint)

Baking soda: natural tooth cleanser for hundreds of years, natural whitener

Bentonite clay: binds to toxins in the body (attracts metals and pathogens and prevents them from passing through the intestines into the bloodstream)

Sage: natural tooth whitener

Salt: good minerals!

Peppermint essential oil: antibacterial and pain-relieving properties. Adds a minty flavor

My way: just baking soda!

Fancier way:

1 tablespoon baking soda

1 tablespoon bentonite clay

1 tablespoon calcium powder

1 tablespoon Sage

½ tablespoon sea salt

15 drops Peppermint essential oil

Storage: empty spice container (my baking soda used to be basil), small mason jar or other small container

don't just GRIN & BEAR IT

make your own tooth powder

MAIN INGREDIENT: baking soda
OPTIONAL ADDITIONS: salt, sage, calcium powder, bentonite clay, essential oils

DIY: just baking soda or

- 1 Tbsp baking soda
- 1 Tbsp bentonite clay
- 1 Tbsp calcium powder
- 1 Tbsp sage
- 1/2 Tbsp salt
- 15 drops peppermint

sea salt - good minerals!

↳ antibacterial & pain-relieving properties. plus it has a minty flavor!

STORE IN: empty spice container, mason or other small jar

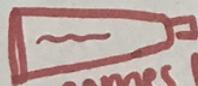
why should you switch?

conventional toothpaste...

is much more expensive



has iffy ingredients



comes in single-use PLASTIC tubes

FLUORIDE

TITANIUM DIOXIDE

SODIUM LAURYL SULFATE

really isn't too great. don't swallow it!

may be carcinogenic, may damage cells

makes it foam but honestly overrated (and not good)

RD A MEASUREMENTS
(abrasiveness of toothpaste)
0-10 low, 150-250 harmful

7 BAKING SODA

95 KID'S CREST

159 CREST PRO HEALTH



Family and friend reactions:

My sister Rachel decided to give the tooth powder a shot. She's been pretty interested in the switches I've been making in my life and was eager to learn about this one too. It was just the baking soda since we didn't have any other ingredients to mix in, and that's what I had been using.

Budget is definitely a concern for her (being a recent graduate), so the idea of paying a lot less money for a product used twice daily was appealing. She gave it a shot and she was not a fan. Her reaction was pretty funny. The baking soda was a very strong, more coarse than she was used to (which is where the mixing other ingredients comes in).

I also brought this up to my friend Drew. He studied environmental policy and now studies geology, so he's very invested in matters of the earth. I've been sharing the whole Project Green Challenge process with him, so I figured he'd be pretty interested. We talked about the benefits of switching to any natural toothpaste. I showed him the baking soda, and he was interested in switching to something more sustainable, but figured straight baking soda wasn't the move for him.

I also brought this up to my parents. My mom was super excited (which I was surprised about)! She was never really a fan of commercial toothpastes and remembers when toothpaste was mostly baking soda in the first place. It's funny because I never really noticed how many environmentally friendly/aware things she does/products she uses in her day to day life. My mom was happy to switch right away and she's going to continue to use it!