

# SOMETHING TO CHEW OVER

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# SOMETHING TO CHEW OVER

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## BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION

- Cesarean sections are becoming more frequent as technology advances. Once the mother is out of surgery she given a clear liquid diet to follow until bowel sounds are heard and passage of flatus happens.
- Patients are often hungry after delivery and need adequate calories to produce sufficient breast milk for their newborns and to begin the healing process.
- Gum chewing after cesarean section is thought to promote the cephalic-vagal reflex which activates digestive enzymes, stimulates the stomach, and increases intestinal peristalsis.

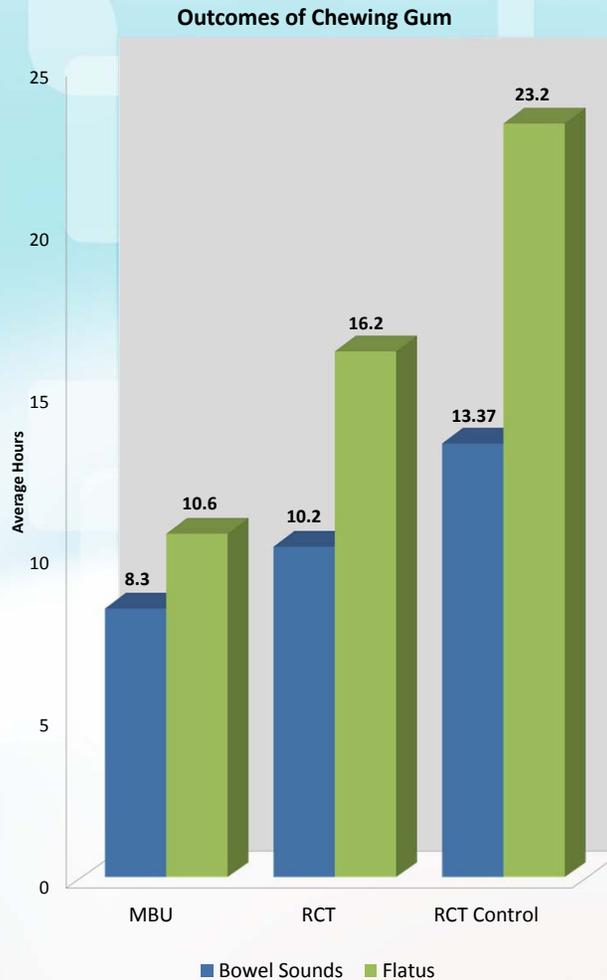
## PICO Question

- Does chewing gum at 2 hours post cesarean section and at meal time for at least 30 minutes increase return of bowel function sooner compared to clear fluids only?

## METHODS

- Ensuring post-operative patients are chewing gum on arrival to MBU and with clear meals for at least 15 minutes and that RNs are listening to bowels sounds at least once every 4 hours.
- Outcome indicators include status of bowel sounds and passage of flatus.
- Flyers were created and hung in break rooms and at the RN charge desk. Handouts were created for RN and patient, emails were sent reminding about start date and significance of completing project on as many patients as possible.
- Gum was donated by the PCS and was peppermint sugar-free chewing gum. The patient was assessed for any allergies or intolerances before starting.
- Project completed 6/3/16-6/27/16, reminders for RNs and updates about project status given at shift huddles and weekly check-ins with MBU PCS, Jennifer King.

## OUTCOMES



## RESULTS

- 11 post cesarean section participated from 6/3/16 through 6/27/2016.
- Our study found that post-operative patients had active bowel sounds in 8.3 hours and passed flatus in 10.6 hours.
- Consulted randomized controlled trials, or RCTs, showed results of 10.2 hours to active bowel sounds and 16.2 hours to first flatus when patients chewed gum.
- The same RCTs had control groups that showed active bowel sounds in 13.3 hours and passed flatus in 23.2 hours

## CONCLUSIONS

- Results of our study coincide with RCT articles and suggest that chewing gum promotes intestinal mobility more efficiently than a clear diet only.
- Scheduled cesarean section mothers should be counseled to bring in chewing gum for post-operative recovery.
- Chewing gum should be available on MBU for unscheduled and emergency cesarean section mothers.
- TLC e-learning modules can be created to disseminate information to L&D, MBU and other hospital staff.

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