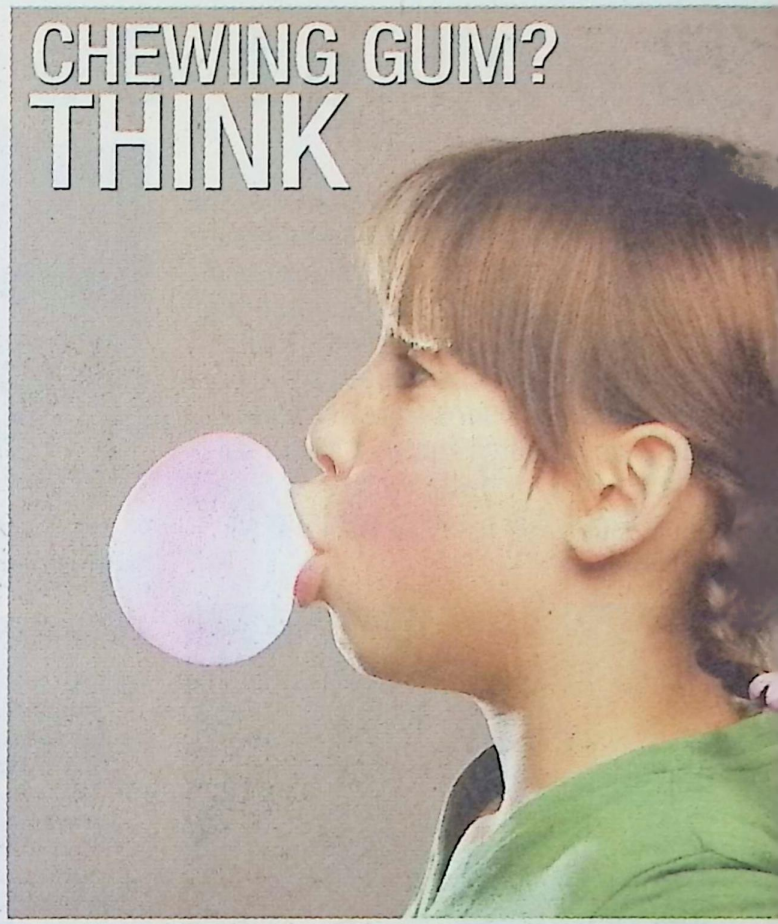
CHEWING GUM? THINK



Teenagers are notorious for chewing a lot of gum. The lip smacking, bubble popping, discarded gum stuck to the sole give teachers and parents a headache.

Now, Dr Nathan Watemberg of Tel Aviv University-affiliated Meir Medical Center has found that gum-chewing teenagers, and younger children as well, are giving themselves headaches too. His findings, published in *Pediatric Neurology*, could help treat countless cases of migraine and tension headaches in adolescents without the need for additional testing or medication.

"Out of our 30 patients, 26 reported significant improvement, and 19 had complete headache resolution," writes Dr Watemberg. "Twenty of the improved patients later agreed to go back to chewing gum, and all of them reported an immediate relapse of symptoms."

Until now there has been little medical research on the relationship between gum chewing and headaches.

Dr. Watemberg says his findings can be put to use immediately. By advising teenagers with chronic headaches to simply stop chewing gum, doctors can provide many of them with quick and effective treatment, without the need for expensive diagnostic tests or medications.

Dogs Recognise Familiar Faces from Images

So far the specialised skill for recognising facial features holistically has been assumed to be a quality that only humans and possibly primates possess. Although it's well known, that faces and eye contact play an important role in the communication between dogs and humans, this was the first study, where facial recognition of dogs was investigated with eye movement tracking.

The researchers, led by Professor Outi Vainio at the University of Helsinki, tested dogs' spontaneous behaviour towards images – if the dogs are not trained to recognise faces are they able to see faces in the images and do they naturally look at familiar and strange faces differently?



"Dogs were trained to lie still during the image presentation and to perform the task independently. Dogs seemed to experience the task rewarding, because they were very eager to participate" writes professor Vainio. Dogs' eye movements were measured while they watched facial images of familiar humans and dogs (e.g. dog's owner and another dog from the same family) being displayed on the computer screen. As a comparison, the dogs were shown facial images from dogs and humans that the dogs had never met.

The results indicate that dogs were able to perceive faces in the images. Dogs looked at images of dogs longer than images of humans, regardless of the familiarity of the faces presented in the images. This corresponds to a previous study by Professor Vainio's research group, where it was found that dogs prefer viewing conspecific faces over human faces.