World Oral Health Day – 20th March 2019

Statement from Anke Sentko, Vice President Regulatory Affairs & Nutrition Communication at BENEO

This year's World Oral Health Day campaign focuses on the link between oral care and overall health and well-being with its strapline: 'Act on mouth health – a healthy mouth and body go hand in hand'. Taking care of the mouth, teeth and gums is important, but according to increasing research, having a healthy mouth doesn't just help to avoid tooth decay, it may also help ward off a range of wider medical disorders[i].

Oral diseases now affect half of the world's population (3.58 billion people), with tooth decay in permanent teeth being the most prevalent condition[ii]. Recent media reports in the UK have highlighted that tooth decay is the number one reason for child hospital admissions, whilst across Europe adults aged 35-44 have an average of 10-20 teeth with dental decay[iii].

Practicing good oral hygiene is the precursor to a healthy mouth, though even with the best tooth brushing technique, some bacteria will still be present. With this in mind, good dental hygiene can be supported by the use of sugar-free candies and chewing gums, as they do not provide food for oral bacteria. Sugar-free products also prolong the time for regeneration as well as remineralisation (self-repairing effect) on the teeth, whilst the action of sucking and chewing creates saliva that gives overall relief to the mouth.

There are a growing number of solutions to help manufacturers develop solutions that support oral health. These include functional ingredients such as BENEO's toothfriendly sugar replacer ISOMALT. It is the number one sugar replacer in sugar-free hard candies worldwide and is also a preferred ingredient for sugar-free chewing gums. Additionally, BENEO's toothfriendly sugar Palatinose™ offers manufacturers possibilities for creating chocolates, chewie candies and more that do not promote tooth decay. Both, ISOMALT and Palatinose™ have an EU health claim for being toothfriendly and 'contributing to tooth mineralisation' as well as an FDA health claim for 'not promoting tooth decay'. With solutions like these on hand, manufacturers

have an opportunity to reformulate products to become toothfriendly – offering yet another way for people to help 'act on mouth health', supporting a healthy mouth and body.

So, on World Oral Health Day, why not choose a sweet treat that will keep you smiling?

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[i] Source: https://www.colgateprofessional.com/education/patient-education/topics/systemic/why-a-healthy-mouth-is-good-for-your-body

[ii] Source: The Global Burden of Disease Study 2016, as mentioned in: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/oral-health

[iii] Source: World Health Organization, factsheet on oral health and sugars intake