HOME

Scientists Created a Plant-Based Gum That Neutralizes 95% of Flu and Herpes Viruses

By bestfolkmedicine · 19/05/2026 · 7 min read



Imagine if one day, protecting yourself from certain viruses could be as simple as chewing a piece of gum.

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It sounds almost too futuristic to be real, but researchers have been exploring exactly that: a **plant-based antiviral chewing gum** designed to trap and neutralize viruses in the mouth before they spread further.

This is not ordinary gum. It is made using a special protein found in **lablab beans**, also known as hyacinth beans. In laboratory tests, this bean-based gum reduced viral loads of influenza and herpes

simplex viruses by more than 95%. Researchers tested it against two influenza A strains, H1N1 and H3N2, and two herpes simplex viruses, HSV-1 and HSV-2.

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That is why this discovery is getting so much attention.

It combines something beautifully simple — a plant compound — with modern science, targeted delivery, and a very practical idea: if many viruses begin spreading through the mouth and throat, why not create a natural "trap" right there?

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The Mouth: A Major Gateway for Viruses

The mouth is not just for eating, speaking, and breathing. It is also one of the first places where many germs enter, multiply, and spread.

When people cough, talk, kiss, share utensils, or breathe close to one another, viruses can pass through saliva and respiratory droplets. This is one reason scientists are interested in reducing viral load in the mouth.

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The idea behind this antiviral gum is not to "cure" the flu or herpes. Instead, it may help **lower the amount of virus present in saliva and oral fluids**, which could potentially reduce transmission risk. The study used a natural viral-trapping protein called FRIL, formulated into clinical-grade chewing gum.

In simple words: the gum acts like a plant-based sponge for viruses.

What Is Lablab Bean?

Lablab bean, or **Lablab purpureus**, is a legume eaten in different parts of the world. It is not a new plant, but researchers are now paying attention to one of its most fascinating natural compounds.

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This bean contains a protein called **FRIL**, short for *Flt3 receptor-interacting lectin*. According to researchers, FRIL can bind to certain viruses and help trap them, preventing them from freely

spreading in the oral environment.

This is where the herbalist's heart gets excited.

Nature often carries quiet intelligence. Plants are not just food. They produce protective compounds, bitter compounds, aromatic oils, polyphenols, fibers, minerals, and proteins that can interact with the body in remarkable ways.

But it is important to be clear: this does not mean eating lablab beans will give the same result as the specially formulated gum used in the study. The gum was designed to release the active protein in a controlled way inside the mouth.

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The Study: What Did Scientists Find?

Researchers developed a clinical-grade chewing gum containing the bean-derived FRIL protein. In experimental models, the gum substantially reduced viral loads of herpes simplex viruses and influenza A strains.

The most attention-grabbing result was this:

At 40 mg/mL of bean gum, virus neutralization above 95% was observed in lab testing using influenza strains H1N1 and H3N2.

The researchers also studied herpes simplex virus types 1 and 2, which are commonly associated with oral and genital herpes infections. In lab models, the gum showed strong neutralizing potential against these viruses too.

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This is why some scientists believe antiviral gum could one day become a simple public health tool — especially during outbreaks.

Why This Could Matter During Flu Season

Flu spreads easily, especially in crowded spaces. Schools, airports, offices, buses, clinics, and family gatherings can all become places where respiratory viruses move quickly.

Vaccines and hygiene measures remain important, but scientists are always looking for additional tools.

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A gum like this could theoretically be useful because it is:

Easy to use
Portable
Plant-based
Non-invasive
Targeted to the mouth
Potentially useful before or during exposure

It may be especially interesting for situations where people are in close contact, such as healthcare settings, classrooms, travel, elder-care homes, or crowded events.

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But we must stay grounded: most of this research is still experimental. Lab results are promising, but they are not the same as proving real-world prevention in people.

Could It Help With Herpes Transmission?

Herpes simplex viruses can be present in oral fluids, especially during active cold sores, but sometimes also when symptoms are not obvious.

The idea of lowering oral viral load is therefore very interesting.

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If a chewing gum can trap herpes viruses in the mouth, it could potentially reduce the amount of virus available for spread. But again, this does not mean it treats herpes outbreaks or replaces medical care.

People with active cold sores should still avoid kissing, sharing drinks, sharing utensils, or close oral contact until fully healed.

Think of this gum as a possible future support tool — not a cure.

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Why Researchers Are Also Looking at Bird Flu

One of the most fascinating parts of this research is that scientists are also exploring whether similar antiviral approaches could help with **avian flu**, including use in poultry. The goal would be to reduce viral transmission not only in humans but also in animals where outbreaks can begin or spread.

That is why some headlines call this a possible “pandemic-curbing” technology.

The logic is simple: if we can reduce viral load at key points of transmission, we may reduce spread.

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It is a small idea with potentially large implications.

The Herbalist Perspective: Ancient Plants, Modern Delivery

This discovery is exciting because it shows how plant-based compounds may be used in modern, practical ways.

For centuries, herbalists have used plants to support the body’s natural defenses: thyme for the throat, elderberry for winter wellness, garlic for microbial balance, licorice root for mucous membranes, and green tea for antioxidant support.

But this gum is different.

It is not just a traditional remedy. It is a **scientifically designed delivery system** using a plant protein to interact with viruses directly in the mouth.

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That is the future of natural medicine: not replacing science, but working with it.

What This Does NOT Mean

Let’s be honest and responsible.

This plant-based gum is not currently something you can use as a proven flu or herpes treatment. It is not a replacement for hygiene, rest, nutrition, or veterinary/public health measures for bird flu.

It also does not mean that chewing regular gum protects you from viruses.

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The effect comes from the specific bean-derived FRIL protein and the way it was formulated into clinical-grade gum.

So the takeaway is not: “Chew any gum and you are protected.”

The real takeaway is: **plants may help inspire the next generation of antiviral tools.**

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Natural Ways to Support Your Defenses Now

While this antiviral gum is still developing, there are simple daily habits that support immune resilience.

Drink enough water.
Sleep deeply and consistently.
Eat colorful plant foods.
Use herbs like thyme, ginger, garlic, rosemary, and oregano in meals.
Keep vitamin D levels in a healthy range.
Wash hands often.
Avoid sharing cups or utensils during illness.
Stay home when actively sick.
Support your gut with fiber-rich foods.

These habits may sound basic, but the immune system thrives on consistency.

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There is no single magic remedy. The body responds best to daily care.

Final Thoughts

A plant-based chewing gum that neutralized more than 95% of flu and herpes viruses in lab testing is a remarkable discovery.

It is simple, elegant, and surprisingly practical.

A bean.

A protein.

A piece of gum.

A new way to trap viruses where transmission often begins.

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We are not at the finish line yet, but this research opens an exciting door. It reminds us that nature still holds powerful answers — and when ancient plant wisdom meets modern science, the results can be extraordinary.

One day, a simple plant-based gum may become part of our seasonal wellness toolkit.

Until then, let this discovery be a beautiful reminder:

Sometimes the smallest natural solutions can carry the biggest potential.

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