New research shows that one in five people do not have a dentist, with 50 per cent blaming lack of access, 45% blaming cost, with 28% of patients too scared to visit.

The survey, rolled out by Wrigley’s Orbit Complete and the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF) shows the attitudes of more than 4,000 adult consumers and 100 dentists.

The results showed that 56 per cent of people use NHS dentists compared to just 23% visiting private practitioners.

Paying for dental treatment is a major negative factor said the survey, with a quarter of consumers expecting to pay more than £30 for treatment.

Nigel Carter, CEO of the British Dental Health Foundation said: ‘Since the last dental census of this size took place nearly a decade ago, consumers are recognising that dental health is important, however it is still too low down on the health agenda, and in particular there is a level of ignorance about how oral health can be linked to overall health. Looking after your oral health is inexpensive and easy; regular check-ups, using a toothpaste containing fluoride, brushing between your teeth and chewing sugar-free gum that contains xylitol, are proven to benefit dental health and should be just as much a part of your regime as going to the gym or eating your five a day.’

Meanwhile The Wrigley Company launched two new flavours to its Orbit Complete range of sugar-free chewing gum with xylitol. The two products, strawberry and lemon and lime are to go on sale from April this year.

Commenting on the new products, Alexandra Mac-Hutchon, communications manager for The Wrigley Company said: ‘We are very proud of our oral healthcare products and their benefits related to maintaining good oral health.’

She added: ‘Chewing Orbit Complete sugar-free gum with xylitol when it is not possible to brush is a great way for patients to look after their teeth when they are on the go. It is proven to help reduce plaque and help reduce the risk of tooth decay. We are really excited to be able to offer the same benefits in sugar-free fruity flavours and hope that this will encourage more people to chew Orbit Complete to look after their oral healthcare.’

The new strawberry and lemon and lime flavours of chewing gum will be accredited by the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF), together with the existing Orbit Complete sugarfree products.