

# Chewing too much hassle? Japan's got just the thing

October 21 2014

---



Rino Sashihara (L) and Haruka Kodama, members of pop group HKT48, display Lotte's prototype 'Rhythmi-Kamu', ear phones that count and record the number of times you chew, in Tokyo, on October 21, 2014

Are you worried that you're just not chewing enough to keep your mind and body in tip-top condition? Then never fear: Japan has invented something to help you count your bites.

A small-scale Japanese study last year, among others, suggested there

was a connection between chomping and cognitive function, and the belief in a link between [chewing](#) and health is widely held in Japan.

Now a Tokyo-based gum-maker has created earphones that record the number of times you move your jaw, along with the speed and strength of each bite.

"Chewing, unless you make a conscious effort, can be seen as a bit of a pain," Katsumi Kawai, chief marketing officer of Lotte said, adding the firm has noticed some people consider chewing gum to be something of a hassle.

"As a gum maker, this is a great concern," he said.

Lotte's "Rhythmi-Kamu"—a pun on the English word "rhythmical" and "kamu" ("to chew" in Japanese)—uses sensors mounted inside ear pieces to carefully measure each bite.

It bleeps and flashes as it sends the data to a [smartphone app](#), which can be used to track exactly how much chewing a user has done in any given period, should that need ever arise.

The technology can also be used to switch on or off music on phone by chewing in a certain pattern, Lotte says, while admitting mastering the skill takes a bit of practice.



A model demonstrates Lotte's prototype 'Rhythmi-Kamu', ear phones that count and record the number of times you chew, during a press preview in Tokyo, on October 21, 2014

Hiroshima City University engineer Kazuhiro Taniguchi, whose ear-switch technology was used in the device said he was pleased with how it had turned out, adding that the gadget had "satisfying functions".

Lotte has no plans to commercialise the Rhythmi-Kamu, but would like to persuade research institutions to use it to advance studies on human chewing.

© 2014 AFP

Citation: Chewing too much hassle? Japan's got just the thing (2014, October 21) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-10-hassle-japan.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.