

# Landenberg chemist invents unique tartar-reducing toothpaste

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Landenberg chemist John Gontarz displays his unique tartar-reducing toothpaste for which he acquired a patent.

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LANDENBERG-John Gontarz of Landenberg spent his life suffering with cavities, irritated gums and gingivitis. Although he tried every toothpaste on the market and diligently followed his dentist's instructions, nothing seemed to help.

Being a retired research chemist, he couldn't believe that there wasn't a product that could help people who shared the same problems. He was looking for a toothpaste that would soften tartar so it could be gently brushed away with his toothbrush, and avoid having to visit the dentist four times per year.

Although the dental companies said it couldn't be done, and most dentists and hygienists still are skeptical that it works, after nearly nine years and countless formulations, Gontarz invented and patented a toothpaste that does exactly what he wanted.

Gontarz has lived in southern Chester County for almost 50 years. For that entire time he's had dental problems. Despite a rigorous dental hygiene routine that had him using the best "tartar reducing" toothpastes, antibacterial mouthwashes, floss and plaque removers each day, he heard the same message from his hygienist and dentist. –"you need to do better".

After one hygiene appointment both the hygienist and dentist suggested that he needed to get his teeth cleaned every three months or face periodontal problems and possible loss of teeth.

"Tartar is a chemistry problem and I will use chemistry to solve it," Gontarz said.

Gontarz decided to tackle this problem like he would if given an assignment at work. First, he read/learned everything he could about tartar in academic and patent literature. Next he created a plan for how to attack tartar. Tartar is a hard solid, like a marbleized composite that is used in bathroom sinks. It is a matrix of hard minerals which come from saliva and glues. This mixture initially forms plaque. Over a rather short time period the plaque becomes stone hard tartar. Ideally Gontarz wanted a way to reverse this hardening process within the normal two-minute tooth brushing cycle.

Over five years he made countless mixtures of commercially available "tartar control toothpastes" and personal care ingredients. Nevertheless for five years, each cleaning appointment with his hygienist and dentist resulted in the same comment, "It's no better".

Gontarz decided that he needed to step away from the normal pairings used when combining dental ingredients and try some out-of-the-box combinations. He opted to try a couple components that had never been used together in a toothpaste or any oral care application, but had the properties he was seeking. At his next hygiene appointment both the hygienist and dentist commented, "What have you done, your teeth look fantastic and your gums look healthy with no bleeding,"

With this feedback he continued refining his product and soon was giving samples of toothpaste to family and his Southern Chester County friends.

For the next three years Gontarz continued to refine his formulations until he found the holy grail: a toothpaste that removed tartar and plaque and worked on almost everyone. Plus through testing he discovered that besides removing tartar, the toothpaste offered other dental benefits. John applied for patents on his toothpaste and eventually was granted a U.S. patent on Dec. 31, 2019.

As word of the special toothpaste spread from Gontarz's friends to their friends, demand for the product grew. Recently demand reached the point where production needs could no longer be met in-house. To solve this nice problem, Gontarz partnered with another southern Chester County resident, who runs a FDA inspected manufacturing facility in our area. With this step, what was a personal need, had blossomed into a business opportunity. Gontarz expanded his testing and got other local dentists to test his product on their patients. He worked with friends from the art department of West Chester University to create product packaging and design his marketing materials.

Even if his toothpaste never turns into a big business, Gontarz sleeps well at night knowing that four dental visits a year to remove tartar are not in his future.

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