Is it appropriate to chew gum at work?

My co-workers are driving me crazy with the smacking and popping noises they make when they chew. It's not a pretty sight to watch someone chew with their mouth wide open, either.

The short answer is that it is appropriate to chew gum on the job, as long as you do it quietly. It is not appropriate, however, to pop bubbles or make smacking sounds or other unseemly noises that disturb others. That kind of gum-chewing is no different than eating food with your mouth open. One reason why I believe chewing gum is acceptable is that it provides a healthy alternative for smokers who are trying to quit. Still, just because chewing is acceptable doesn't mean it's OK to gross out your co-workers. As so often with etiquette, it's not what you do that matters, it's how you do it: gum chewers need to be aware of how their chewing affects others. They should keep a tissue or wrapper handy for disposing of their gum, and be ready to get rid of it at a moment's notice--especially if they're suddenly called into a meeting with a manager or a prospective client.

Source: Post, Peter. "Etiquette at Work." Boston Globe 27 Nov. 2005.

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