A New Orleans-based start-up called Theodent has launched a cocoa-based toothpaste that is said to be as effective as fluoride-based alternatives at fighting tooth decay. Company founder Arman Sadeghpour says that the toothpaste, which has been launched nationwide in the US, is the culmination of 30 years of research, including his own doctoral dissertation on the subject, which was published by the Tulane University in 2007.

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At the time the research created a splash on the back of claims that the discovery of a white crystalline powder, extracted from cocoa, contained a chemical make-up similar to caffeine that served to make tooth enamel stronger and even promoted its growth.

First major oral care breakthrough in nearly 100 years? The discovery is claimed to be the first major breakthrough in oral care since toothpaste manufacturers first started to add fluoride to toothpaste formulations back in 1914.

Now that research has culminated in the development of Rennou, a proprietary blend of the cocoa extract, together with the addition of several key minerals that are known to promote oral care. Rennou has been given the safety go-ahead by the US Food and Drug Administration, as well as securing two US patents, while a worldwide patent is still pending.

You'll see the difference in one week, manufacturer claims "Dental decay is the only disease that every human on this earth suffers from ... so it's a concern for everyone." Sadeghpour told the Tulane University. "Rennou effectuates a change in the actual hardness of the tooth ... After one week, you start to see these [beneficial] results."

Sadeghpour also claims that because the toothpaste is a fluoride-free formula it should particularly appeal to individuals suffering from conditions exacerbated by fluoride such as thyroid disorders and bone diseases, as well as young children, who are not recommended to exceed certain levels of fluoride. The toothpaste is mint flavored, but the company is hoping to expand the line to mouthwash and floss, as well as a chocolate-flavored alternative for children.

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