

5 Ways to Have a Mouth-Healthy Halloween

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All children look forward to Halloween because of crazy costumes, decorations and, especially, candy. They dream of chocolate bars, chewing gum and about every other sweet treat imaginable. Parents often have some conflicting feelings, though. They want to see their kids have fun but, more importantly, they want their children to stay healthy.

These concerns aren't far-fetched when you consider that most children consume huge amounts of candy on Halloween night. Just how much? **One reason study shows that most kids consume between 3,500 and 7,000 calories on that night alone.** That statistic doesn't factor dinner into the equation, either. So what are some ways for your child to have a mouth-healthy Halloween this year? Here are 5 to consider.

Eat Candy After Meals

There are several reasons why allowing your children candy only after meals makes sense. First, there is a risk that your child may eat candy when they're hungry and eat way too much. Not only is this harmful to teeth because of all the extra sugar, but it's harmful to their bodies. Another benefit of **after-meal snacking is that saliva production is higher during meals. If your child eats candy right after a meal, their teeth will clean themselves better as a result.**

Avoid Sticky or Hard Candy

It's easy to think of all candy as equally bad for your child's teeth. The reality is that certain kinds are worse than others. **Some of the biggest culprits are chewy, taffy-like candies. These stick in teeth more easily and stay there longer. Saliva has a more difficult time cleaning your child's teeth in this case.** Sticky candy such as caramels or gummy bears are especially bad if your child has braces. They give the bacteria in their mouth a tasty snack. Unless you determine to have your child use fluoride toothpaste, floss and brush after candy consumption, it's best to pull these treats out of their candy collection when they get home. Candy apples seem harmless but can yank out a filling or undo a sealant in a hurry.

When it comes to hard candy, there are only two ways to eat it. Unfortunately, both ways are bad for your teeth. If

your child sucks on the candy, this causes prolonged exposure of sugars to their teeth. This is just what cavity producing bacteria love. Crunching candy is even worse. This can damage orthodontic work and break teeth or fillings. ***Chocolates such as M&Ms are a better choice. They aren't as prone to sticking to teeth, dissolve quickly and are a favorite of most children.***

Hand Out Sugar-Free Gum

If you're looking for a healthier alternative to hand out at the door this year, ***a great option is*** sugar-free gum. ***The gum helps to get rid of food particles in the teeth and boosts saliva production.*** You can also give sugar-free gum to your child to help them cut down on their sugar intake and to clean their teeth. One nice side advantage is that many sugar-free gums hold their flavor longer than sugar-laden gums. This means that your child will likely chew it a little longer, which will mean even cleaner teeth.

Monitor the Candy

The reality is that even many adults struggle with self-control when it comes to candy. This is all the more true with kids. They just don't understand health and tooth concerns like you do. If you don't take charge when it comes to their candy, they will. Although there's the occasional child who will store their candy and save it, most kids will eat as much as they can in short amounts of time. ***It's best to hold the candy in a safe place hidden where your kids don't know where it is. Bring out the candy after a meal, set limits on how much your child can have and then put it away again until the next appropriate time.*** This works best if you prepare your child for this ahead of time.

Use Fluorinated Toothpaste

Another great way to help your kids have healthy teeth during Halloween is to buy them fluorinated toothpaste. This will help to cut down on cavity and tooth decay issues. This is a great habit to get into all year.

Protect Your Kids' Teeth All Year Long

If you're interested in protecting your child's teeth throughout the year, our dental insurance plans can help. Dental coverage is necessary under the ACA for children but not adults. ***If you are in need of dental insurance, feel free to get in touch with us.*** We have [full coverage dental plans](#) that include No waiting periods, No deductibles, and No maximums! Our dental insurance plans start at \$18 a month.

Check us out online for open enrollment information. You can [complete the full dental insurance application process by going online to fill out the application forms.](#)