

TOOTHFULLY. *speaking*



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HALLOWEEN CANDIES ... BEWARE!

Outside of Christmas, Halloween is THE most anticipated event for your child over the whole year. Only a parent with a heart of stone could take ALL their treats away to prevent consumption... even parents who are dentists (yours truly included) will allow an evening or two of indulgence!

Candy containing sugar, provides oral bacteria with a food source, which is what causes tooth decay. The two main things to consider when your child is eating Halloween candy are:

1. Moderation
2. Reduce the contact time that sugar is present in the mouth; avoid sticky taffy, gummy bears, caramel as it can velcro to teeth and stay in the mouth for a longer time

Helpful Hints:

- Screen your child's candy before they dig into the bag full throttle. Remove candy that is manufactured in China with unregulated colouring & dyes as well as sticky and hard candies & suckers
- Have your child brush their teeth (or at the very least rinse with water), as soon as possible after eating candy - the impact of the sugar on the teeth will be minimized
- Despite popular belief, children can eat candy at ANYTIME. There is no good time of day to eat candy but THE most harmful is before bed
- Eating candy with a meal sounds sacrilegious but the increased saliva production while eating will wash sugar off the teeth, it is the lesser of evils
- Give your child sugarless gum to chew (xylitol containing) or a cheese snack after eating candy. Chewing gum increases saliva and xylitol helps to control the bacteria that cause tooth decay and the protein casein found in cheese reduces acid affects in the mouth
- Candy should be consumed quickly in one sitting to decrease the contact time with teeth so avoid slow dissolving hard candies/suckers. Recent studies have shown that length of time consuming sugar can be more harmful than the amount of sugar consumed. Suckers are worse for the teeth than a chocolate bar for example ... a plus for chocolate lovers!
- Avoid "fun size" packaging as they have additional ingredients that are worse than a traditionally packaged candy

Preventatively, visit the dentist and have sealants put into your child's teeth grooves; this protects tooth enamel against corrosion caused by excess sugar. Another great advice is to avoid sodas. They are loaded with sugar (often over 10 teaspoons per can), and are acidic enough to dissolve away tooth enamel. When sipped over long periods of time, teeth are bathed with sugar and acid continuously throughout the day.

Hope these tips are as useful to you as they were to me. And don't forget to apply the same rules to your own teeth. Happy Trick or Treating!



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