



How to Have a Tooth-Friendly...



At Halloween time, it's natural to be concerned about the effects of candy on your children's teeth. Here are some tips on protecting children's dental health while still letting them enjoy that special occasion.

Decay or cavities occur when sugars in foods and drinks react with the bacteria in plaque. Plaque is a thin, sticky film that keeps forming on your teeth. It contains many types of bacteria. Every time you eat or drink anything containing sugars, the bacteria reacts with the plaque to form an acid. This acid can attack the teeth and start to dissolve the enamel. These attacks can last for up to an hour

after eating or drinking. Therefore it is important not to keep snacking on sugary foods or sipping sugary drinks throughout the day. It's a good idea to allow your ghosts and goblins to eat a piece of Halloween candy at mealtime instead of as a snack.

Some Halloween Candy Tips

If your children are going to eat candy,

here are some things to keep in mind:

- Agree on limits. Before Halloween, talk with your kids and let them know how much candy they will be allowed to eat per day. There should be limits for their overall health, as well as their oral health. Setting limits in advance will avoid disagreements and disappointment later. Ration your children's treats over several days. They can select a few pieces to have along with their healthy snack or at meals.
- Divide and conquer. Parents can divide candy into categories such as "for school" or "at home" so that they can monitor brushing and candy intake. There are a few treats that kids should



avoid if brushing immediately isn't an option: lollipops, hard candy, toffees and jujubes, which stay in the mouth or get stuck in teeth.

- Brush and floss. We all know that Halloween, to most children, means candy. To help keep cavities away and maintain your child's good dental health this Halloween, remember to have them brush and floss after eating sugary treats. Parents should keep a close eye on how well kids are brushing, especially after Halloween. The length of time kids brush is also important. Using an egg timer is a great tool to ensure kids are brushing long enough.

Some Alternatives to Candy

If you want to try something different this year, instead of giving out Halloween candy, check out these fun alternatives for Halloween night:

- Spider rings or vampire teeth.
- Halloween stickers or temporary tattoos.
- Halloween pencils and erasers.
- Sugar-free gum.
- Toothbrushes.

Year-Round Dental Health Tips

No matter what you decide to give out this Halloween, remember to follow these tips to help protect your children's teeth from cavities and maintain good oral health throughout the entire year:

- Brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss daily.
- Eat healthy foods and nutritious snacks.
- Visit the dentist for regular checkups.

For more information please feel free to contact a member of the Dental Health program in Haldimand County at 905-318-6623 Ext. 3293 or in Norfolk County at 519-426-6170/905-318-6623 Ext. 3293

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