

# Halloween Candy

## Can Be Frightening for Kids' Teeth

With Halloween right around the corner, parents will be busy tracking down the highly sought-after Wonder Woman or Spider-Man costume for their child to wear while going out trick-or-treating. In their dash to the costume store, however, moms and dads shouldn't forget about the effect all that sugary candy could have on kids' teeth.

While consuming several pieces of candy in celebration of Halloween may not immediately harm one's teeth, excessive and continuous candy consumption can certainly have an effect. Too much exposure to sugary candies and snacks can eventually lead to tooth decay, especially in young children's teeth. Teeth are more susceptible to decay during the first few years after eruption in the mouth, and since children are getting teeth until around age 13, they

have a higher vulnerability for decay. What's more, hard candy can sometimes cause chips or breaks in teeth when bitten down upon, and excessively gummy, sticky, or chewy candies can get lodged in the back molars or between orthodontic appliances, such as braces.

The best advice for parents is to not let Halloween treats hang around the house for too long. Consider allowing your kids to have a few pieces of candy each night for one week, and then throwing the rest out. The frequency of sugar consumption has a lot to do with how cavity-causing decay forms in the mouth.

Be diligent in making sure that children brush and floss their teeth right after eating their candy, and don't let them go to sleep without brushing away the sugary residue from their teeth. (Of course, some of you parents may sneak a few pieces of candy from the trick-or-treat bag on the sly, and the same guidelines apply to you: Brush and floss your teeth after that Milky Way bar.)

Letting your children enjoy their Halloween candy in moderation won't be harmful as long as they have good oral health habits. This will ensure that their smile stays healthy well beyond the most "frightening" time of the year.

