



Healthy People Dental

Healthy Halloween

Halloween is around the corner, which for most children means bags of free candy and a chance to build a stockpile of sweets for the winter. No surprise, Halloween can also present parents with a variety of health and safety challenges.

Here are 10 ways you can help your children stay MouthHealthy during Halloween and year-round.

Time It Right

Eat Halloween candy (and other sugary foods) with meals or shortly after mealtime. Saliva production increases during meals and helps cancel out acids produced by bacteria in your mouth and helps rinse away food particles.

Choose Candy Carefully

Avoid hard candy and other sweets that stay in your mouth for a long time. Aside from how often you snack, the length of time sugary food is in your mouth plays a role in tooth decay. Unless it is a sugar-free product, candies that stay in the mouth for a long period of time subject teeth to an increased risk for tooth decay.

Avoid Sticky Situations

Sticky candies cling to your teeth. The stickier candies, like taffy and gummy bears, take longer to get washed away by saliva, increasing the risk for tooth decay.

Drink More Water

Drinking fluoridated water can help prevent tooth decay. If you choose bottled water, look for kinds that are fluoridated.

Maintain a Healthy Diet

Your body is like a complex machine. The foods you choose as fuel and how often you "fill up" affect your general health and that of your teeth and gums.

Stay Away from Sugary Beverages

This includes soda, sports drinks and flavored waters. When teeth come in frequent contact with beverages that contain sugar, the risk of tooth decay is increased.

Chew Gum with the ADA Seal

Chewing sugarless gum for 20 minutes after meals helps reduce tooth decay, because increased saliva flow helps wash out food and neutralize the acid produced by dental plaque bacteria. Find one with the ADA Seal.

Brush Twice a Day

Brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes with an ADA-accepted fluoride toothpaste. Remember, replace your toothbrush every three or four months, or sooner if the bristles are frayed. A worn toothbrush won't do a good job of cleaning your teeth.

Clean Between Your Teeth

Floss your teeth once a day. Decay-causing bacteria get between teeth where toothbrush bristles can't reach. Flossing helps remove plaque and food particles from between the teeth and under the gum line.

Visit Your Dentist

Regular visits to your dentist can help prevent problems from occurring and catch those that do occur early, when they are easy to "treat."

