



October 27, 2011

Happy, Healthy Halloween



Every year your local grocery store stocks up on sugary treats for the end of the month's explosion of Halloween festivities, and while you may cringe at the thought of all of that candy wreaking havoc on your child's teeth, brain and tummy, at a certain age it becomes hard to avoid the trick-or-treating. To make this season a little healthier, we got the advice of Dr. Timothy Chase, a cosmetic dentist based in New York City, as he shares his insights on some of the best and worst Halloween candy in regards to your dental health.

Avoid sticky candies

- Taffies
- Caramel, coconut, or nut filled candies

These candies stick to teeth, creating a great space for bacteria to linger. Prolonged exposure to bacteria is known for producing cavities.

Beware hard candies

- Lollipops
- Jawbreakers

Hard candy takes a long time to dissolve in the mouth. The longer the sugar remains, the more acidic the mouth becomes. This process can break down tooth enamel.

Check the acidity and sugar content

- Sour candy
- Powdery candy such as Pixie Stix

The acid content in sour candy is another culprit in the breakdown of tooth enamel. Powdery candy like Pixie Stix are filled with pure sugar, a catalyst in changing the mouth's pH.

Try these safer bets

- Pure chocolate
- Sugar-free gum

Plain chocolate can be a safe option because it doesn't stick to the teeth. Sugar-free gum leaves no residue and contains natural sugars that inhibit the growth of bacteria. Of course, you'll want to beware, also, of artificial sweeteners, so choose your gum wisely.