



California Dental Association Cautions Halloween Can Be Scary for Teeth

CDA Provides Tips for Protecting Children's Oral Health this Halloween

For Immediate Release

Oct. 27, 2011

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Sacramento, Calif. — This Halloween, the California Dental Association urges trick-or-treaters to make good oral hygiene habits a priority. CDA suggests maintaining a regular oral hygiene routine of brushing and flossing, especially after consuming sugary treats.

“It is important to know that the frequency of ingesting sweets has a greater impact on the development of tooth decay than the amount consumed,” said Lindsay Robinson, DDS, a pediatric dentist. “So whether it’s a single piece of candy or a whole bag of sweets, it is important that children are brushing with fluoride toothpaste and flossing after consumption in order to best protect their teeth and prevent cavities.”

Sticky candies like caramel, gummies and taffy adhere to teeth longer than something like chocolate, which can easily be washed away by saliva or rinsing with water. Hard or chewy candies are typically held in the mouth longer, giving bacteria in the mouth more time to create acid that weakens tooth enamel and causes cavities. CDA suggests kids and adults limit these types of treats and always remember to brush afterward.

Parents may especially want to limit children’s consumption of sour candy as these treats can do more damage to teeth than others.

“Sour candies are very acidic, some with pH levels close to that of battery acid. These candies can be very damaging to teeth, even permanently wearing away dental enamel,” said Robinson. “If sour candies are going to be eaten, neutralize the acids afterward by eating cheese or drinking milk. After consuming acidic foods or beverages it is best to wait at least 60 minutes before brushing as the acid softens enamel – making it more susceptible to erosion.”

If parents are spooked by sticky sweets, some healthy, tooth-conscious alternatives include:

- Small chocolate candies (without caramel or chewy components that can stick to teeth)
- Trail mix, nuts or seeds
- String cheese
- Sugarless gum
- Stickers
- Small packets of crayons or markers
- Glow sticks
- Bubbles

Most importantly, protect teeth throughout the year – brush with fluoride toothpaste, floss regularly and visit a dentist for a complete dental check-up on a regular basis.

(more)

California Dental Association

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About the California Dental Association

The California Dental Association is the non-profit organization representing organized dentistry in California. Founded in 1870, CDA is committed to the success of our members in service to their patients and the public. CDA also contributes to the oral health of Californians through various comprehensive programs and advocacy. CDA's membership consists of more than 25,000 dentists, making it the largest constituent of the American Dental Association. For more information, visit cda.org.

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