



NEWS RELEASE

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Halloween trick: Treats can be bad for kid's teeth *~Choose chocolate instead of chewy candies~*

NAPERVILLE, Ill. (Oct. 2010) – After trick-or-treating this Halloween, what kids see as a big bag full of treats, really adds up to one big trick – sugar. No matter how good it tastes in its candy “costume,” sugar has long been identified by oral health experts as a major culprit behind cavities.

“Prolonged exposure to sugary treats can contribute to the development of cavities in children’s teeth,” said Dr. Katina Morelli, DDS, dental director for Delta Dental of Illinois. “Parents can help their kids fight cavities by decreasing the amount of time sugar comes in contact with their teeth, as well as moderating the amount and kind of candy they consume.”

Morelli says that while all sugary treats translate to trouble for teeth, some are worse than others. Sticky or chewy candies result in sugar being in contact with teeth for longer periods of time. Opt instead for sugar-free candies or chocolates that melt away quickly.

Regardless of the type of candy eaten, it should be followed up with a good brushing or glass of water to help rinse sugar away from the teeth.

Delta Dental of Illinois offers these tips to help you protect your children’s teeth during Halloween and all year:

- Choose candy that can be eaten quickly and easily to limit the amount of time sugar is in contact with the teeth.
- Steer away from sticky candies like sugared fruit snacks, caramels, taffy, popcorn balls and other candies that expose the teeth to sugar for long periods of time.
- Encourage children to eat a small amount of candy in one sitting followed by a

- glass of water or a thorough tooth brushing.
- Encourage children to eat a good meal prior to trick-or-treating, so there will be less temptation to fill up on candy.
 - Avoid buying Halloween candy too far ahead of time to remove the temptation for children (and adults) to dig in.
 - Consider purchasing non-food treats for those who visit your home, such as coloring books or pens and pencils.
 - Encourage brushing at least twice a day with a fluoridated toothpaste, flossing and regular dental checkups to help establish good oral health habits in children and to prevent cavities all year long.

For more ideas about how to avoid cavities this Halloween, visit Delta Dental of Illinois' Mouth Matters website at www.MouthMattersIL.com.

Delta Dental of Illinois (DDIL) is a not-for-profit dental service corporation specializing in providing comprehensive, easy-to-use and cost-effective benefits to 1.6 million employees and family members in more than 4,400 employee groups throughout Illinois. Based in Naperville, Ill., DDIL offers an array of extensive nationwide network-based managed fee-for-service, PPO and dental HMO plans.

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