

October 17, 2012

How Sugar Affects Your Smile



Halloween is almost here. That means another night of trick-or-treating is almost here too. Typically, we think of Halloween and trick-or-treating as just a kid's thing, but we shouldn't lie—we adults like to sneak a piece (or two or three) of candy when we can.

And of course, [our team](#) doesn't want to discourage that. There's nothing wrong with enjoying a piece of candy from time to time. But too much is bad for your health and your smile.

So instead of preaching against candy, we just want to spend some time briefly describing how sugar affects your smile. That way you can make informed decision this Halloween that are right for you and your children.

How Does Sugar Cause Cavities?

Despite what you might think, sugar itself doesn't cause cavities. What it does, though, is create just the right environment for them to flourish.

When you eat or drink something high in sugar, a special type of bacteria in our mouths breaks down that sugar, converting it to acid. It's this acid that's responsible for damaging sensitive tooth enamel and causing what we know of as tooth decay and cavities.

Not all sweeteners are bad for your teeth, though. [Xylitol](#) is a natural sweetener found in fruits and vegetables. It has far fewer calories than traditional sugar, and instead of creating an acidic environment when broken down, it promotes a healthy pH that benefits teeth and gums. That's why xylitol is often used in natural toothpastes and mouthwashes.

Enjoy Your Halloween

With all that said, we hope you and your family have a safe, fun-filled Halloween. Don't worry about enjoying your favorite candy, but don't overindulge either. Brush and floss after enjoying your treats, and give your smile extra support with a fluoride mouthwash. You can also substitute your standard Halloween treats with ones sweetened with xylitol.