

## Don't Let Halloween Candy Play Tricks on Your Children's Teeth

Nothing says Halloween like trick-or-treating. And the best parts of trick-or-treating? Sugary hard candies. Sticky sweets. Chocolatey, nutty, caramel-y morsels of all sizes and shapes that can wreak havoc on your little one's teeth. No parent wants to "be the bad guy" and deny their child candy on Halloween. Luckily, there are a few simple ways to help keep your child's teeth white and healthy without restricting them from sweets.



Guardian and [Children's Health Fund](#) have created fun and educational ways to teach children how to take care of their teeth all year long with the Guardians of the Smile program. Our friend the Tooth Guardian is traveling across the country to teach kids how they can keep their smiles clean and healthy all year long.

### **Candy with food (and water, too)**

Brushing twice a day and being a floss boss daily will help keep smiles healthy even with an extra piece of candy or three on Halloween. Another pro-tip is to eat candy close to meal times. Our mouths produce extra saliva while eating other foods which can help rinse away harmful food particles. A glass of water will also help clear the sugar from candy away. Other drinks like soda and juice are loaded with sugar, so be sure to bring water for your little one while trick-or-treating.

### **When in doubt, choose chocolate**

Sticky and hard candies are delicious but are hard to remove from the tooth's surface which can allow the bacteria to create acid in the mouth. Hard candies can chip teeth, which is extra scary. Instead, opt to hand-out and encourage chocolate over these sticky or hard treats. Chocolate is a better alternative because its sugar does not stick as much.



### **Yum, gum**

Chewing sugar-free gum can distract your child from their sweet tooth, and increased saliva helps wash their mouths. Sugar-free gum can also be a great substitute for handing out candy on Halloween if you want to be the responsible house this year. It's also a good idea to bring a few pieces to chew during trick-or-treating.

Collecting (and enjoying) candy is the highlight of Halloween, but these sugary treats can cause scary and lasting damage on your child's teeth. Try having your child fill up on a healthy dinner or nutritious snack before they go trick-or-treating. Teaching your child about moderation at an early age will also go a long way in life. Instead of letting them eat a lot of candy in a short period of time, ration treats over several days or weeks instead. Following these tips will help your child have a fun Halloween and also help keep their smiles healthy all year long.