



# Have a Tooth Healthy Halloween

(YES, it's possible)! *By Dr. Julia Richman DDS, Dino Kids Dentistry*



At Dino Kid's Dentistry, we LOVE Halloween. From the scary movies, the spooky decorations, that chill in the air, the costumes and treats, not to mention the pumpkin spice lattes... It's a great time to make-believe, dress up, scare ourselves a little, and enjoy some sweet treats!

Did you know that Halloween is a very traditional holiday? The name, Hallowe'en, is a shortened version of All Hallows Eve, traditionally the night before the Christian holiday All Hallows Day, otherwise known as All Saints Day. Halloween has traditionally been celebrated in Scotland and Ireland for centuries but was introduced in the United States by Irish and Scottish migrants in the 19th century. Traditional activities include of course trick-or-treating, but also bobbing for apples, visiting haunted attractions, playing pranks, and carving pumpkins into jack-o-lanterns.

The Mexican celebration of Dia de los Muertos is also related to All Hallows Day. During this holiday, people visit and decorate the graves of family members, often with bright orange Mexican marigolds. They also may leave offerings of food and drink at their loved ones' gravesites, and enjoy sugar skulls and pan de muerto, a sweet egg bread.

## Trivia Question:

How many pounds of candy corn are produced each year?

**Answer:** According to the National Confectioners Association, 35 million pounds of candy corn is made and sold every year— about 9 billion pieces!

Sweets are such a traditional and fun part of Halloween but eating too many sugary foods too often can cause cavities and is not healthy for growing kids. Sticky candy, like candy corn and even the iconic caramel apples, is unfortunately the worst type of candy for teeth, because it tends to linger in grooves and the crevices between teeth. Cavity-causing bacteria metabolize sugar and produce acids, which dissolve tooth structure to produce holes, or cavities. Sticky candy that lingers in the teeth is an all-you-can-eat buffet to these little nasties! But sticky candy is everywhere! As parents, how do we protect our children's teeth and still allow them to enjoy Halloween?

- All things in moderation! One night of indulgence is better than night after night of candy after dinner. Try to rid your house of sweets—especially sticky candies—after Halloween so they don't become a daily temptation.
- Chocolate is the most tooth-friendly treat. Substitute chocolate for sticky or gummy candy.
- Consider other treats like popcorn, cheese, and cut up fruit. All are all tooth friendly snacks.
- Tattoos are always in style as a substitute for candy!
- Make sure your child brushes his or her teeth before going to bed Halloween night. Bonus points for flossing! We recommend daily flossing where teeth touch.

- Drinking water helps to wash sugar away and is also healthy for your child.
- Make sure, if your child is due for his or her checkup, to call to schedule it! We can help your child learn some brushing and flossing skills and help them learn about healthy and unhealthy foods.

**Trivia Question:** What famous magician died on Halloween?

**Answer:** Harry Houdini.

From all of the Dino Kid's team, we hope you and your family have a wonderful Halloween. Stay safe and have a great time trick or treating with your littles (and bigs). And remember, we're happy to schedule your dinosaur, princess, ghost, pirate, creeper, or little pumpkin, for a dental appointment to keep those fangs in good health!

**Trivia Question:** What item is banned in California on Halloween?

**Answer:** Silly String.

This article is for general information only and is not intended as medical or dental advice. Please seek medical and dental care with you or your child's medical or dental provider for specific questions. Historical information on Halloween and Dia de Los Muertos is based on Wikipedia articles [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Day\\_of\\_the\\_Dead](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Day_of_the_Dead) and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halloween>.

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