



THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

For immediate release (Offert en français sur demande)

Media Release

How Sweet It Is: Dental Hygienists Promote Oral Health at Halloween

October 23, 2017 (Ottawa, ON) — Canada's dental hygienists remind all ghosts and goblins preparing for a night of Halloween fun to beware of treats—particularly sticky and chewy candies—that can get stuck in the grooves of teeth and increase the risk of dental cavities.

According to Health Canada, 57% of children ages 6 to 11 have or have had cavities. While no one wants to take the “treat” out of trick-or-treating, a little bit of restraint and advance planning can go a long way to maintaining children's oral health. As Sophia Baltzis, president of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) explains, “Reducing overall sugar consumption, carefully timing when treats are eaten, and promoting good oral hygiene habits can prevent tooth decay and help your child to have a cavity-free Halloween.” Here are some tips from Canadian dental hygienists for a tooth-friendly night of fun.

- Choose sugar-free candy and chewing gum, or chocolates and powdery candy (which dissolve quickly in the mouth) over toffees, lollipops or other hard treats. The less time that sugar is in contact with the teeth, the better.
- Hand out small toys, stickers, temporary tattoos or glow sticks instead of candy.
- Set a daily limit on treats and remind children to brush their teeth before eating candy.
- Encourage children to drink a glass of water to rinse away the sugar after eating if brushing beforehand is not an option.
- Have your children eat their candy after a meal rather than as a mid-day snack.

Parents and guardians can continue to encourage good oral health after Halloween by celebrating National Brush Day on November 1. It's a perfect time to give everyone in the family a new toothbrush and talk about the importance of keeping teeth clean. “Make a pledge with your children to brush for two minutes, twice a day, with a fluoride toothpaste, and show them how to brush their teeth and tongue and clean between their teeth,” Baltzis adds. Together with regularly scheduled dental hygiene appointments, proper oral hygiene care at home will keep our children smiling through Halloween and beyond!

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 28,495 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 19,000 individual members including dental hygienists and students. Dental hygiene is the sixth largest registered health profession in Canada with professionals working in a variety of settings, including independent dental hygiene practice, with people of all ages, addressing issues related to oral health. For more information on oral health, visit: www.dentalhygienecanada.ca.

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