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Candy and your teeth

Are your children's teeth in danger after the annual Halloween binge? *by Dr. Susan Maples*

Q. My son has an insatiable sweet tooth so…. Halloween is his favorite holiday! How dangerous is that post-Halloween candy binging?

A. Good question! Some consider their favorite candy the ultimate "comfort food"—especially chocolate. Regarding dental health, the stickier the candy, the more cavity- causing it is. Even more significant is the *frequency* of the sugar consumption. Like pop sipping, candy nibbling throughout the day is risky. Our own saliva is our best defense for lowering the acid levels created by the bacteria-sugar combo. When you nibble throughout the day, the saliva doesn't have a chance to lower acids and re-mineralize enamel.

Here's another hazard: If you suffer from 'dry mouth', a common side effect from many medications, the threat of decay is much greater. And what do people with 'dry mouth' often use to stimulate saliva flow? Candy! (Try sugar free hard candies instead.)

Back to Halloween: It's healthier for your son's teeth to chow on his candy as a desert with a meal rather than snack throughout the day.