



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

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### **Delta Dental Offers Tricks for Avoiding Scary Treats** **When it comes to cavities, not all candy is created equal**

**Johnston, IA (October 15, 2010)** – This year, Americans will spend close to \$9 billion on candy, and in October a lot of that candy will end up on the teeth of trick-or-treating children. Delta Dental of Iowa, the state’s largest dental benefits provider, wants to remind parents that when it comes to cavities and teeth not all candy is created equal.

“Cavities and tooth decay are caused by prolonged exposure to sugar,” said Ed Schooley, DDS, dental director for Delta Dental of Iowa. “Parents can help their kids fight cavities by decreasing the amount of time sugar comes in contact with their teeth, as well as moderating the amount of candy they consume.”

Sugar has long been identified by oral health experts as a major cause of tooth decay and cavities. If not removed by brushing or some other means, naturally occurring bacteria in the mouth form a colorless, sticky film called plaque. Cavity-causing microorganisms within plaque feed on sugar and turn it into acid. This acid attacks tooth enamel and causes tooth decay.

Sticky or chewy candies result in sugar being in contact with teeth for longer periods of time. When children chew sticky candies such as caramels or taffy, candy gets stuck on the surface and in between crevices, creating a fertile environment for decay-producing plaque.

Monitoring your child’s sugar intake and ensuring regular brushing habits to remove plaque will help prevent tooth decay this Halloween and make your child’s next visit to the dentist cavity-free.

## **Delta Dental Offers Halloween Tips for Parents.**

- Choose candy that can be eaten quickly and easily to limit the amount of time sugar is in contact with the teeth.
- Steer away from sticky candies like sugared fruit snacks, caramels, popcorn balls and other candies that expose the teeth to sugar for long periods of time.
- Encourage children to eat a small amount of candy in one sitting followed by a glass of water or a thorough tooth brushing.
- Encourage children to eat a good meal prior to trick-or-treating, so there will be less temptation to fill up on candy.
- Avoid buying Halloween candy too far ahead of time to remove the temptation for children (and adults).
- Consider purchasing non-food treats for those who visit your home, such as coloring books or pens and pencils.

Halloween is a great time for parents to think about their children's teeth, but oral health should be a lifelong concern. "Monitor your children's candy and sugar consumption year-round to prevent cavities and tooth decay. Even in baby teeth, oral infections can lead to further health problems if they go untreated," said Schooley.

Encourage good oral health habits with your children, including brushing at least twice a day, flossing and visiting the dentist every six months to ensure the sugary villains don't stick around on your children's teeth long after Halloween is over.

For more tips on how to improve your oral health and non-sugar Halloween treats, visit [www.OralHealthIA.com](http://www.OralHealthIA.com).

Delta Dental of Iowa is the largest and most experienced provider of dental benefits in the state. As a not-for-profit, Delta Dental of Iowa invests in oral health projects through the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation that focus on access to care, prevention, education and research. The Iowa company is a member of the Delta Dental Plans Association, a national organization of not-for-profit Delta Dental plans. The national association is the largest dental benefits carrier in the nation providing coverage to 54 million people in more than 93,600 employer groups.

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