

# Beware the perils of Halloween candy

Halloween is every kid's dream. After all, it's the one day of the year children can come home with mounds of free candy that can last a week or more. And while all those chocolate bars, candy corns and sugar-doused treats might taste good, parents might be shocked to learn how many calories they contain.

According to the Chicago Dental Society, the average trick-or-treater will consume 5,435 calories and more than three cups of sugar from Halloween candy this year - putting young teeth at risk for cavities.

Calorie-wise, it is comparable to consuming three quarts of premium chocolate ice cream, two tubes of cookie dough or 2.5 gallons of soda, according to the CDS.

"Those bite-size candies do add up," said Dr. Trucia Drummond, Chicago Dental Society spokesperson in a press release. "That's why I encourage parents to consider giving out something other than candy."

"If you don't want to give out fruit or popcorn, stickers, plastic rings, crayons, temporary tattoos and similar items are good alternatives," she said, noting that they can be purchased in bulk.

If you still want to hand out candy, choose ones that are easily chewed and swallowed, she said.

"A child may crack a tooth on a hard candy if he bites down on it," Dr. Drummond said. Moreover, because hard candies slowly dissolve in the mouth, teeth are put under a prolonged acid attack, making them more vulnerable to cavities.

Sticky, chewy candies, such as popcorn balls, taffy, fruit leathers and gummy bears, should also be avoided because bits of the candy may stick to teeth, slowly dissolving and releasing sugars into the mouth, making the teeth vulnerable to cavities, according to a CDS press release.

If children must eat candy, dentists recommend enjoying it in moderation and brushing and flossing immediately after consumption.

According to the U.S. Census, there are 1,198 U.S. manufacturing establishments that produced chocolate and cocoa products in 2005, employing 38,718 people and shipping \$13.6 billion worth of goods. There were 477 U.S. establishments that manufactured nonchocolate confectionary products in 2005.

Americans consumed 26 pounds per capita of candy last year, the largest portion of which is believed to have been consumed at Halloween, according to the U.S. Census.