

What you don't know about Halloween candy and braces – good news from Dr. Alan Bagden and Ormco



Soft Cookies for Braces

Black Friday may be the busiest day of the year for retailers, but November 1 means all-hands-on-deck for orthodontists, according to Dr. Alan Bagden of Springfield, VA. “Always, the day after Halloween,” says Dr. Bagden, “when we get to the office, there will be no fewer than three or four patients already waiting for us. They’ve either broken a wire or popped off a bracket from eating Halloween candy that was too sticky, chewy or hard.”

It doesn't have to be this way – you can have your Halloween fun and eat it too. Here's the scoop.

If you or a family member is in braces, you may already have been told to avoid the hard/sticky/chewy stuff, but Dr. Bagden has some more handy insight about why. “What people need to realize is that the texture of what they consume is most important,” he says. This means the best candies to eat are soft and melt-in-your-mouth types such as Hershey's kisses or peanut-butter cups. “Second,” he adds, “think about the duration of what's in your mouth. The worst is solid hard candies, because kids will suck on them for an hour, creating a coating of sugar on the teeth that bacteria love to feed on – and worse yet, then they bite on them so the crunchy, sticky candy goes right into the nooks in the teeth and stay there.” Again, soft chocolate “melts” away rather than taking up residence.

Even what kids and party-goers drink can be a problem. Think about taking a sip of cider or soda every 20 minutes; you're just saturating bacteria with its own constant food source. Fruit juice and Gatorade can be just as bad, so drink up and drink water!

Another general tip that Dr. Badgen is happy to share helps you maintain great oral health: when you're brushing, remember teeth with braces are basically divided into two areas. So, brush from the bracket toward the tooth-edge as well as from the bracket to the gum-edge. When you think of your teeth as having these two zones, it helps make sense of the need to clean both thoroughly.

Dr. Bagden is a frequent lecturer in contemporary orthodontics and specializes in using Ormco products such as the Insignia computer-aided smile design system and the Damon bracket system. In fact, he was a pioneer in the use of advanced metals for arch wires (such as the heat-sensitive NiTi arch wires) and worked closely with Dr. Dwight Damon to develop the Damon bracket system.

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