



# NEWS RELEASE

## For Immediate Release

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### 5 tricks for a tooth-friendly Halloween

**NAPERVILLE, Ill. (October 13, 2014)** – Most little boys and “ghouls” will dress up and ring neighborhood doorbells hoping to collect a large stash of candy this Halloween. After trick-or-treating, Delta Dental of Illinois encourages parents to pay close attention to the types of treats children bring home to protect their teeth from sugar terror.

“While no sweets are good for teeth, some are better than others,” said Dr. Katina Spadoni, dental director for Delta Dental of Illinois. “Candy that melts and disappears quickly is least harmful to kids’ teeth. The longer teeth are exposed to sugar, the longer bacteria can feed on it, which could produce cavity-causing acid.”

Nearly four of five Illinois households pass out Halloween candy, according to the Delta Dental of Illinois Children’s Oral Health Survey. Chocolate was the number one treat handed out (82 percent), followed by chewy candy (33 percent), hard candy (33 percent) and caramel (17 percent).

Spadoni says this is somewhat good news for parents. Chocolate is one of the best options, because it dissolves quickly and can be eaten easily, which decreases the amount of time sugar stays in contact with teeth.

Aside from choosing chocolate, Delta Dental of Illinois offers these five tips for making this a tooth-friendly Halloween.

1. **Encourage children to have a good meal prior to trick-or-treating** so there will be less temptation to fill up on candy.
2. **Limit the amount of chewy and hard candies kids eat.** Hard candy is tough on teeth because it tends to be sucked on at a leisurely pace for an extended period of time. Chewy, sticky treats are damaging because they are high in sugar, spend a prolonged amount of time stuck to teeth and are more difficult for saliva to break down.
3. **Only allow kids to have candy in small portions at limited times,** such as after a meal, as dessert or at regular snack times. It’s best to avoid letting kids snack on candy throughout the day.
4. **Kids should brush their teeth or at least rinse with water after eating sweets.** Remember that high sugar diets are detrimental to oral and overall health, and children should always brush their

teeth at least twice a day with fluoridated toothpaste, floss once a day and visit the dentist regularly.

5. **Give kids something other than candy.** Another option is to let children trade in their treats for a toy, and then donate the candy to the troops or a local dentist buy-back program. Some houses don't even pass out candy. In fact, nearly 25 percent of Illinois parents hand out non-candy items, such as toys, money or fruit.<sup>1</sup>

For additional tips on how to help keep kids' teeth healthy during Halloween and all year long, visit the Tooth Fairy's Halloween website at [ToothFairyTrickyTreats.com](http://ToothFairyTrickyTreats.com).

***About Delta Dental of Illinois***

*Delta Dental of Illinois (DDIL) is a not-for-profit dental service corporation that provides dental benefit programs to individuals and more than 5,000 employee groups throughout Illinois. DDIL covers 2 million individuals, employees and family members in these groups nationwide. DDIL is based in Naperville, Illinois and offers single-site administration and client services.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Morpace Inc. conducted the 2013 Delta Dental of Illinois Children's Oral Health Survey. Interviews were conducted statewide via the Internet with 151 primary caregivers of children from birth to age 11. For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of error is ±3.2 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.*