

Halloween Sugar Comes But Once a Year... Soda Pop Poses a Bigger, Daily Threat to Children's Teeth

Contact: Barbara M. Fornasiero 248.651.7536; 586.817.8414 or eafocus@bignet.net

Rochester, MI., October 3 , 2003 --- While parents may fret about the sugary effects of Halloween candy on their children's teeth, Rochester dentist [Kurt Doolin](#) urges them to focus on the greater, ongoing threat to children's oral health: daily consumption of soda pop.

"Sticky candies and those containing citric acid are the worst candy culprits because they adhere to the teeth and can quickly lead to decay," acknowledges Dr. Doolin. "A single serving fruit chew-type candy pack contains an unacceptably high 34 grams of sugar, but children don't tend to eat this candy every day. It is the alarming increase in daily consumption of soda pop, and the resulting resurgence in cavities, that pose a much greater threat to children's teeth."

A standard 6.75 ounce juice drink contains 23 grams of sugar. While that amount is high, a 12 ounce soda may contain 43 grams or more of sugar. Further, while a parent would typically pack a child's lunch with one juice container, children are increasingly opting for the 20 ounce super size options when purchasing soda pop on their own, increasing their sugar intake to 57 grams, not counting other food products they consume that also contain high amounts of sugar. (The FDA guidelines don't offer a specific sugar limit; rather, the wording is to "choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars.")

Dr. Doolin says some of the blame has to be placed with the schools' on-site availability of soda pop.

"Middle school children can form a daily soda pop ritual when it is so readily available. That sets the stage for a lifetime habit that totally contradicts good oral health habits," explains Dr. Doolin.

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What's a parent to do? Dr. Doolin offers the following advice:

- Lobby school principals and administrators to minimize access to soda at school (many Rochester middle schools have removed or are in the process of removing soda pop from school machines due to strong parent urging)
- Purchase milk tickets when available through your child's school so that soda is not a lunch-time option
- Adjust home buying patterns so that soda becomes a special treat rather than a grocery staple
- Use milk, bottled water and pure juices for soda substitutes
- When children do drink soda pop, encourage them to rinse their mouths with water immediately after
- Continue to encourage twice a day, two-minute brushing sessions and regular dental cleanings

Dr. Doolin holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Michigan State University and a Doctor of Dental Science degree from the University of Detroit. He completed his postgraduate residency at the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Doolin received additional [surgical and prosthetic](#) training in dental [implantology](#) from the Misch Implant Institute and ongoing comprehensive training in aesthetic dentistry from the [Las Vegas School for Advanced Dental Studies](#). Dr. Doolin's [staff](#) of 10 includes dentist [Dr. Jeffrey Haddad](#) and 4 dental hygienists. His practice focuses on aesthetic and implant dentistry as well as general dentistry for children and adults.

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