



California Dental Hygienists' Association  
The Voice of Dental Hygiene

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## **HALLOWEEN HORROR: CALIFORNIA DENTAL HYGIENISTS ISSUE WARNING ABOUT THE DANGERS OF SOUR CANDY**

### ***Popular New Generation of Candy Almost Like Eating Battery Acid***

**GLENDALE, Calif. (Oct. 6, 2008)** – Looking for a really frightening costume to wear for Halloween this year? How about dressing up as a piece of sour acid candy, which attacks teeth like Freddy Kreuger goes after his victims?

While this new generation of candy is highly popular, most of it contains acid levels so high that it approaches the ph level of battery acid, according to the [California Dental Hygienists' Association](#) (CDHA), which today issued a statewide warning to parents about the dangers of sour candy.

“This Halloween, we are advising adults to think twice about buying sour candies for trick-or-treaters,” said Erika Feltham, a Registered Dental Hygienist and CDHA member who has studied this issue for more than a decade. “We also are encouraging parents to comb through their child’s bag at the end of the night to remove sour acid candies and replace them with a small piece of non-sour sugarless candy or gum.”

[Sour candy](#) comes in dozens of varieties and forms including hard, soft, chewy, gummy, gels, liquid sprays, crystals, foam sprays, powders, cotton candy and chewing gums. Most people think this type of candy is safer because it has less sugar, said Feltham, but they don’t know that the [acid content](#) is toward the extreme end of the acidic spectrum.

“It is not at all surprising that this candy is a contributing factor to [acid erosion](#),” she said. “With repeated exposure and frequency, sour candy can also lead to a host of oral health problems, including increased cavities, tooth sensitivity, staining, soft-tissue sensitivities and loss of shine.”

Because of this, CDHA is offering the following tips for this Halloween:

- Avoid, limit or seriously reconsider choosing or eating candy labeled “sour or tart”;
- Remember that “sour” means “acid,” which is bad for teeth;
- Look for the following acids on the back label of ingredients and avoid them: citric, lactic, malic, tartaric, fumaric, adipic, ascorbic;
- Don’t be fooled by “concentrated fruit juice extracts,” which is a code phrase for ingredients that can be highly acidic;
- If you choose to consume sour candies, rinse your mouth with water immediately afterwards to reduce the damaging effects from the acids;
- DO NOT brush your teeth directly after eating sour candy as the toothbrush and toothpaste are abrasive. This will scratch and will remove more of the already softened enamel.

“Most consumers and even many dental professionals are so focused on eliminating sugar that they haven’t paid attention to the newer and more serious candy ingredients containing multiple acids,” said Feltham, who believes the problem is so bad that the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) should require warnings on all sour acid candies.

“These acids are what make the sour candies so tart and appealing,” she said, “but also what makes teeth more susceptible to oral diseases.”

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*The California Dental Hygienists’ Association (CDHA) is the authoritative voice of the state’s dental hygiene profession. The organization was established 20 years ago when two regional associations merged to form a unified professional group. CDHA represents thousands of dental hygienists throughout the state and is dedicated to expanding opportunities for the profession and access to care for all Californians.*