

# HALLOWEEN HINTS

## Make Halloween “Spook-ta-cular” With Braces-Safe Recipes and Tips

(NAPSA)—As Halloween rapidly approaches, children and teenagers across the country are busily planning, designing and selecting their Halloween costumes in preparation for one ultimate goal—Treats!

And whether they’re planning on being witches, goblins or ghouls, a question on the minds of many parents and trick-or-treaters this Halloween is what treats can they eat without hurting their braces. The good news is Halloween can be very sweet with braces, and orthodontic patients can enjoy Halloween fun.

October marks National Orthodontic Health Month, and in honor of the month’s most famous holiday, the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) is providing recipes and tips to parents and orthodontic patients on what type of food they can enjoy on Halloween without causing damage to their braces.

“We recognize that kids will be kids, and they are going to eat sweets,” says Dr. James E. Gjerset, president of the AAO. “We certainly want them to consume treats that will not damage their braces. And with a little awareness and creativity in the kitchen, Halloween can produce big smiles for trick-or-treaters with braces.”

First, it’s important to remember what foods to avoid. On Halloween, and throughout the year, orthodontists recommend that those who wear braces avoid nuts, popcorn, tortilla chips, all hard candy, jelly beans, licorice, taffy, caramel and other chewy candies, whether consumed on their own or as recipe ingredients.



**SMILE—Youngsters who wear braces are smiling, thanks to Halloween treats that will be kind to their braces.**

“If you routinely put walnuts in brownies, keep in mind the orthodontic patient will be able to eat the brownies only if they are free of nuts or other hard foods potentially harmful to braces,” says Dr. Gjerset.

Bobbing for apples also is not recommended for anyone wearing braces. However, orthodontic patients can enjoy thinly sliced apples, dipped in yogurt dip or creamy chocolate sauce.

And orthodontists remind patients to brush after eating sugary treats or starchy snacks, and to floss daily. “Some sweet treats may be permissible occasionally, but only if patients brush and floss right after eating,” says Dr. Gjerset.

Recipes, such as the “Braces-Safe” Halloween Parfait (below), are sure to be enjoyed by all trick-or-treaters this Halloween.

### “Braces-Safe” Halloween Parfait

#### Ingredients:

- 3 boxes instant vanilla pudding (enough to make 12 one-half cup servings)**
- 1 teaspoon red food coloring**

- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon yellow food coloring**
- 1 9-ounce package plain chocolate wafers**
- 6 cups milk**
- Chocolate syrup to taste**
- 1 8-ounce can of mandarin oranges, drained**

#### Directions:

Combine pudding mix and milk in large bowl as directed on the package. Refrigerate until firm. Crush chocolate wafers into crumbs, using a food processor, or put the wafers into a zip-lock bag and crush with a rolling pin.

Combine red and yellow food coloring in a small bowl. Stir into pudding thoroughly, until pudding is orange. Layer pudding with two layers of chocolate crumbs in a parfait cup or glass. Top each layer of crumbs with chocolate syrup to taste before adding the next pudding layer. Top each parfait with mandarin oranges and additional chocolate wafer crumbs.

**Makes eight 8-ounce servings.**

Other Halloween recipes, Jack O’Lantern Fruit Cups, and Almond Sugar Cookie Cut-Outs, can be found on the AAO Web site located at [www.braces.org](http://www.braces.org). Parents interested in additional information on orthodontic treatment and the many benefits of a healthy, beautiful smile may obtain a free video, *A Smile That’s Good for Life*, and other valuable information by calling the AAO’s toll-free information line 1-800-STRAIGHT.