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Frightfully Good Treats

Braces-Friendly Halloween Recipes

FAMILY FEATURES

Caramel apples, popcorn balls, hard candies ... Halloween goodies like these may bring a smile to kids' faces, but for kids with braces, they could cause some unhappy problems. Halloween tends to be a busy time of year for orthodontists — primarily because patients indulge in treats that they should try to avoid. That is why October is National Orthodontic Health Month. Candies and other treats that are hard, chewy, sticky or crunchy have the potential to cause damage to braces. Not only can damaged braces be uncomfortable for the patient, but they may even prolong treatment.

The American Association of Orthodontists has scared up some braces-friendly sweets for the Halloween table to help orthodontic patients stay on track to achieving a healthy beautiful smile. It's no trick — these treat recipes are fun to make, fun to eat — and they won't put a dent in your smile.

For more braces-friendly recipes and tips, visit www.braces.org.



Treat Your Braces Right

Braces-Friendly Treats

In general, orthodontic patients should look for foods that are soft and easy to chew.

- Soft, melt-in-your-mouth chocolates
- Peanut butter cups
- Milk shakes
- Gelatin
- Peeled, thinly sliced apples
- Ice cream



Treats to Avoid

In general, orthodontic patients should avoid treats that are sticky, hard, chewy or crunchy.

- Caramel
- Nuts (including candies that contain nuts)
- Licorice, jelly beans or taffy
- Hard pretzels
- Bubblegum
- Hard candies
- Lollipops
- Popcorn (including unpopped kernels)
- Taco chips
- Ice



Spider Bites

Makes about 3 dozen cookies

- 1 cup shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup cocoa
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 package black rope licorice, cut into short 1-inch pieces
- 1 small tube of green (or color of choice) decorating gel
- Toothpicks

Preheat oven to 375°F. In large bowl, combine shortening, sugar, water, and vanilla. Beat until smooth. Add eggs into mixture and blend. Slowly mix in flour, cocoa, salt and baking powder using low-medium speed.

Drop tablespoon helpings of mixture onto ungreased cookie sheets and roll each helping into a ball. Bake 9 minutes. Let cookies cool for about 10 minutes. Then using a toothpick, create four small holes in either side of the cookie.

Still using the toothpick, push one end of a piece of the cut licorice into each hole, creating the "legs" of the spider. Keep licorice pieces short so as not to harm braces. Once all eight pieces are in place, create eyes or decorate at will using the green decorating gel.

Recipe idea adapted from "The Braces Cookbook" by Pamela Waterman.

Frightful Finger Cookies

Makes: ___ cookies

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 3/4 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup almond slices, or whole almonds
- 1 tube red decorating gel
- 1 tube green food coloring (optional)

Preheat oven to 325°F.

Beat together butter, sugar, egg, almond extract and vanilla. Slowly beat in the flour, baking powder and salt. If you want green finger cookies, add drops of green food coloring to dough until you achieve a nice deep green color.

Divide the dough into four equal parts, cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Take one quarter of the dough at a time from the refrigerator. Break off one heaping teaspoonful and roll it into a finger shape. Squeeze in around the middle of the finger to create a knuckle shape. Then, using a butter knife, make indentations in several places to resemble a finger. Repeat with rest of dough.

Place cookies on a lightly greased baking sheet and bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool. Then, squeeze red decorating gel onto the tip of each finger and gently press an almond on top so the gel oozes out from underneath.

Remove cookies from baking sheets and let them cool on wire racks.

Recipe idea adapted from "CDKitchen.com's" Marlene C. Mcasias.

Black-Cherry Fruit-Bats and Citrus Orange Pumpkin Fruity Cutouts

Makes about 2 dozen each

- Black-Cherry Bats:**
 - 2 3-ounce packages black-cherry gelatin (dry)
 - 3/4 cup water
 - 1/2 cup grape juice
 - 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice

Empty both packages of dry gelatin powder into a large bowl. In medium saucepan, stir together water and juice; bring to a full boil then remove pan from heat. Pour hot juice mixture slowly into bowl, stirring constantly with a large spoon. Keep stirring for two minutes or until all granules have dissolved. Add lemon juice and stir to mix.

Pour mixture into a 9-inch round or square pan and place pan in refrigerator. Chill for at least 3 hours or until firm. Cut into squares with a knife, or into bat-shapes with cookie cutters dipped in hot water. If pieces are hard to get out, set the entire pan for a minute onto a cookie sheet filled with a quarter-inch of hot water. Keep chilled.

For the Citrus Orange Pumpkins, repeat the directions with:

- 2 3-ounce packages orange gelatin (dry)
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup orange juice (no pulp) or lemonade
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice

Use pumpkin-shaped cookies cutters as desired.

Recipe idea adapted from "The Braces Cookbook" by Pamela Waterman.