

Splenda[®], Spice, and Everything Nice



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'Tis the season for lots of good eats. Cookies, caramels, taffy of all kinds, and candy canes fill the counters and end tables around the nation at Christmas. If you're like me, they're absolutely irresistible! The problem is

that the germs that cause tooth decay also love yummy sweets.

Cavities are caused by acids that are produced by germs in the mouth when they are fed by sugars. The longer the period of time that sugar remains in the mouth after we eat, the more acid that is produced and the higher our risk of developing cavities. Christmas treats are not only loaded with sugar, but they are also very sticky. When we eat caramel or taffy, some of that candy sticks between teeth where it is very hard to brush or even floss away.

Of course, the best thing that we can do to help reduce the potential of cavity development is to brush and floss several times a day. Flossing before

bedtime is crucial because cavity-causing germs work overtime while we are sleeping when we don't produce as much saliva. Circular brush strokes with light pressure and rotating the bristles 45 degrees toward the gumline, using a soft toothbrush, has been proven to be more effective than brushing in any manner with a medium or hard toothbrush.

For those of you who make your treats, using a sweetener that does not promote tooth decay, like Splenda[®], would be a good idea. There are many artificial sweeteners on the market, but many break down when subjected to the heat of cooking. Sucralose does not, and it is packaged for use in small

packets or in sugar-like bulk. I get no royalties and I am not advertising for this product, but my wife uses Splenda[®] in her baking, and we love the way it tastes. Now, if we could get rid of the calories from the flour and remove the cholesterol from the eggs and butter, we'd have perfect treats!

Have a very merry Christmas!

Dr. Kevin Huff is a general dentist and a clinical instructor at Case School of Dental Medicine. He is a Fellow in the Academy of General Dentistry and owns the Center for Advanced General Dentistry in Dover. For answers to questions about dental health, call (330) 364-2011 or visit his Web site at www.doctorhuff.net.