

## Too much candy can be scary

Halloween is almost here and soon little ghosts and goblins will be wandering the streets in search of Halloween candy. If your children generally eat well all year long, then enjoying Halloween sweets is not a big deal – the key of course is moderation and making sure there is more to Halloween than just the candy. Try these ideas to help make Halloween a little healthier.

**Serve a healthy meal.** On Halloween night serve a healthy meal before the kids head out to go trick-or-treating. If kids feel full before they go trick-or-treating, they will be less tempted to eat candy along the way and will eat fewer pieces of candy afterwards when they return home.

**Hand out non-sugary treats.** Stand out from the crowd and give out something other than candy. Fun alternatives to treats include Halloween styled pens, pencils, and stickers. If you do give out sweets, avoid the sticky gooey ones – try small plain chocolate bars or sugarless gums which are less likely to promote cavities.

**Encourage exercise while trick or treating.** Make trick-or-treating an active family affair. Walk from house to house instead of driving. Wear pedometers to see how far you go.

**End the evening with active play.** End the trick-or-treating part of the evening early and return home to play some spooktacular active games and healthy snacks.

**Manage the candy:** One of the biggest challenges for kids and parents is managing all that Halloween candy. Ellyn Satter is a well-known specialist on feeding children. She offers these steps to help children learn to manage sweets and to keep sweets in proportion to the other food they eat:

On Halloween night, when your children come home from trick-or-treating, let them lay out their candy, be really excited about it, sort it, and eat as much of it as they want, whenever they want. Let them do the same the next day. On the third day, have them put the candy away (out of sight) and tell them Halloween is over and the candy is a treat. Explain that they can eat the candy at regular meal and snack times - a couple of small pieces for dessert or snacks. Serve milk with a candy snack to boost nutrition. When the candy is gone, return to healthier snacks.

Looking for more healthy Halloween ideas – check out Healthy Families BC for some great activities <http://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/blog/healthy-halloween> and snack ideas <http://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/blog/halloween-party-food>.

Have a spooky, fun and healthy Halloween!

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