

Healthy Halloween Alternatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Halloween is just around the corner. Is your family ready for the big night? Walking through the stores, it's easy to see that Halloween is near. The costumes, pumpkins, and bats are hard to miss. And the candy is everywhere. It's no wonder kids get so excited about this holiday!

There's no question, treats are half the fun of Halloween for children. But, does a treat necessarily mean a chocolate bar with caramel and fudge? There are other treats for kids that can be just as exciting as candy and more importantly, healthier.

As reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there have been drastic increases in childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes in children over the last 20 years. Gathering large quantities of candy on Halloween can lead to kids nibbling on candy for weeks. With this in mind, parents should think about limiting the amount of high calorie candy served at Halloween.

Here are some ideas that can help children have a healthy, happy Halloween without an overload of sugar, fat and calories.

Try non-food treats. These last longer and promote other fun activities besides eating candy!

- * Crayons and pencils
- * Charm bracelets
- * Tiny stuffed animals
- * Yo-yo's
- * Whistles
- * Jump ropes
- * Stickers
- * Rulers
- * Trading cards
- * Key chains

- * Magnets
- * Coloring books.

NUTRITIOUS SUBSTITUTIONS FOR CANDY.

- * Sugar-free chewing gum
- * Snack bag of pretzels
- * Snack bag of peanuts
- * Individual box of animal crackers

EASY RECIPES THAT ARE PERFECT FOR A HALLOWEEN PARTY AND KEEP CANDY TO A MINIMUM.

Monster Mix

Ingredients:

Pretzels as desired

1 bag plain M&Ms

Peanuts as desired

Raisins as desired

Mix together in a bowl in desired proportions, but keeping M&M's to a minimum.

Eyeball Jigglers

Ingredients:

1 package (8 serving size) sugar-free gelatin - any red flavor

1 tub Lite whipped topping, frozen

Blueberries or raisins

Red decorator gel (optional)

Mix gelatin according to directions on package. Pour into individual dessert dishes and refrigerate.

Once firm, put two scoops of whipped topping on top of each dish to resemble eyeballs using a small scoop. Place a blueberry or raisin in the middle of each scoop for the pupil. Use red gel to make blood shot eyes if desired.

Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Creepy Hands

Ingredients: clear plastic gloves

popcorn

pretzel sticks

candy corn (or whole baby carrots cut in half)

string or ribbon

In each glove, place a candy corn in the tips of each finger to make a finger nail. A whole baby carrot cut in half could also be used for this. Then, place a few pretzel sticks in each finger to make fingers. Next, stuff the remaining part of the glove with popcorn. Tie the glove closed using string or ribbon.

Don't forget that inactivity also contributes to obesity. Halloween is a great night for the whole family to get together and do some serious walking. Instead of driving the kids from street to street and sitting in the car, parents should get out and walk with their kids. Keep safety in mind though. Be sure to wear bright clothing and stay on the sidewalks.

For more information on nutrition and physical activity, please visit the Alabama Department of Public Health's Web site at www.adph.org.

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