**Tricky Tips for a Healthier Halloween**

Having a healthy Halloween doesn’t mean you have to give up candy. Alternatively, it doesn’t mean that you only hand out candy full of empty calories either. What is a candy monster to do? Lori Mooney, a registered dietitian at the Center for Healthy Weight and Nutrition at Nationwide Children’s Hospital says that the most important thing a parent can do on Trick-or-Treat night is feed kids a nutritious meal beforehand. This will prevent candy from substituting as dinner and prevent overeating of treats. On the days following Halloween, Lori recommends that parents pair candy with other nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, low fat milk, and lean protein. Other ideas that give children a choice include allowing your child to decide if they want to sell their candy to you, to share their candy with others, or possibly trade it for a toy. Remember, keep the bag of candy outside their bedroom, having candy so close may be irresistible. Set a day to throw all remaining candy away. For example, after one week the leftover candy will be tossed.

*When deciding what you will hand out, consider these candy alternatives:*

- granola bars
- trail mix
- flavored popcorn
- animal crackers
- sugar-free gum
- raisins
- stickers, pens, pencils, and small toys that aren’t choking hazards

If you can’t resist handing out candy look for choices that are lower in fat, sugar, and calories and always choose miniature size candy.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle at Halloween is easier if parents are motivated and are a positive role model. Binging on candy and then asking children to limit their candy won’t work, it sends the wrong message. Even though a little indulgence occurs on Halloween, it won’t derail your healthy lifestyle as long as your family eats nutritious meals on a regular basis. Here is an activity that is fun and makes a healthy treat.

Quarter apples and take a wedge out of the center of each quarter. Dunk them in water with a little lemon juice to prevent browning. Use slivered almonds for teeth (try toasting almonds for color and taste!) Eyes are optional. Stick pretzel rods in and attach candy eyes with peanut butter.

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