

# Having A Happy “Healthy” Halloween

It is getting darker and colder so that means one thing – Halloween is upon us! It is a very festive time for children of all ages. However, it is also the unofficial start of the holiday season. It is the first opportunity since the summer BBQ’s and picnics that food crosses our lips in a bulk portion. Here are some tips to make this Halloween healthy as well as happy!

- ❖ **Keep one central “treats” station that can be monitored. All treats from school, parties, or trick-or-treating should be placed here. In the upcoming weeks to months, you should also place treats from any other holidays in this central place for continued monitoring.**
- ❖ **If there is cross-over in childcare, make a “treats” checklist so that treat portions may be tracked more efficiently by all involved.**
- ❖ **After trick or treating, have the child pick out their favorites and discard the rest.**
- ❖ **Allocate how many pieces of treats or candy your child will be allowed to eat each day. Ideally, 1-3 pieces depending upon the age of your child.**
- ❖ **Allow your child some control over when/how they would like to eat these treats such as after school, after dinner etc...**
- ❖ **If your child is still hungry after “treats” then make sure they still have positive portions of their foods from the rounded food groups: cheese sticks, pretzels, fruit, veggies & dip, low-fat milk, and popcorn to name a few.**
- ❖ **Reinforce with them that the treats are “o.k.” in moderation but we still need to balance the rest of our diet. I feel that it is o.k. to hold treats until certain portions of balance foods like fruits and vegetables are also consumed. That is no different then not letting the child play until they clean their room. Take care of the basics and then there is always room for some fun!**
- ❖ **Try a fun contest (esp. between multiple siblings) to see who can make their Halloween candy last the longest – you may get to Easter and find that you did not consume it all and saved some calories! Some prize incentive may also help in the efforts.**
- ❖ **If there is a special occasion, like a birthday party, the Halloween treats need to take a back seat to other treats for the day.**

Moderation is the best way to tackle the presence of treats throughout the holidays. What we eat/or food choices are not what adds to our body fat and impair our health in all instances. We also have to look at HOW we eat these foods. Being able to define “how much/portion” as well as “how often/frequency” in which we eat these special foods will be the larger determinant of our weight balance and overall health over time.

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