



Managing Your Child's Sugar Intake Around Halloween

By: Dr. Bonnie Feola

It's no surprise that kids love Halloween. They love dressing up in their favorite costumes and they love eating candy! But, as a parent, you know that too much sugar and sweets are not very good for your child's health long term.

Here are 5 tips to help you manage your kid's sugar intake this Halloween.

1. Balance

Make sure to have an abundance of nutritious foods around the kitchen and make them easily available. Kids need a variety of regular foods at scheduled meal times. Make sure to have nutritious foods readily available to help create a balance with your kids when they want to indulge in their Halloween treats.

2. Allow Choices

Candy has a lot of sugar in it. But, telling your child that sugar is "bad" can backfire and actually make candy even more desirable. Instead, try letting your child know that after Halloween night, they can choose 1 or 2 treats to have daily and save the rest for another day. It may help to give them an old empty lunchbox (or shoebox) to keep their remaining candy in a kitchen cupboard or somewhere tucked away where they don't have unlimited, open access to their treats. Also, let your child choose if he or she wants to save a treat for later. They may want to safekeep candy for an afterschool activity or even a winter sport event. Let them decide what candy they want and when they want it. Allowing them to be in control of their 1-2 pieces of candy daily helps them learn to set their own limits.

3. Talk Taste

Children's taste buds have a preference for sweet and salty foods. Now is a great time to engage with your child and learn together. While your kid may be happily eating their Halloween treats, ask them what they are tasting? What do they prefer? Is the candy sweet? Cherry, lemon, apple flavored? What are the differences in taste? Maybe your child prefers sour and tartness from sour candy. Does your child like crunchy, gooey, coconut or fruit-flavored? Use this moment as an opportunity to learn about your kid's likes and dislikes. This information can help you introduce similar flavored, but more nutritious, foods to your child another day.

4. Cut Back on Sugary Drinks

Making water the most important beverage during this holiday will help limit your child's extra sugar intake. Pure water helps regulate your child's body fluid and will help process the empty candy calories they are consuming. Water helps regulate body temperature, prevent constipation, urinary infections and kidney stones. Children up to 8 years of age should drink the number of 8oz cups of water equal to their age; up to a maximum of 64 oz (8- 8oz cups).

5. Consider Donating Unwanted or Excess Candy

Start with asking your child to throw out or donate any candy they don't like. Several national organizations and even local ones accept candy donations. One such organization is [Soldiers' Angels](#) [Treats for Troops](#) program, which sends Halloween candy directly to service men and women around the world. Talk to your child about how they can be a force for good by donating excess candy.