

# MANAGING HALLOWEEN CANDY

By Vivian Matioossian, Registered Dietitian, MS, CDE



Halloween is a time of parties, costumes and of course lots of candy. It can also be a challenging time for parents who are trying to manage their child's desire to eat all that candy. Here are some tips to help limit your child's candy and still enjoy the fun of Halloween.

- ❖ Buy your candy a couple of days before Halloween (or at least keep it out of sight if you buy it early). Buying candy too early makes it too tempting to get into the bag before trick-or-treating even starts.
- ❖ Talk with your child about how much fun trick-or-treating will be, but not so much fun for their body if they eat too much candy. It is important for kids to learn that candy is a treat that can be eaten in small amounts. Decide a day or two before Halloween on what is a reasonable amount of candy to eat that night.
- ❖ Discuss candy eating rules with your child before they go out trick-or-treating. Children should wait until they get home so their parents can inspect the wrappers to ensure they're tightly sealed. Anything that looks suspicious should be tossed out.
- ❖ Feed children dinner or a healthy snack before going out for trick-or-treating so they won't be very hungry and tempted to get into their candy bag as they go from house to house.
- ❖ Go out early, when candy givers are less likely to encourage children to grab a handful of candy so they don't end up stuck with it.
- ❖ Walk, don't drive, if possible, to get some physical activity in while collecting candy.
- ❖ After trick-or-treating, have your child choose a couple of pieces of their favorite candy to eat and divide the remainder of their favorite candies in mini-sized bags. They can spread their candy over several days. Store the extra bags of candy out of reach (not in their bedroom). This helps them feel involved in the decision-making and learn portion control, which is a very important part of healthy eating.
- ❖ Decide on when the candy will be eaten. For example, after dinner or with a healthy snack. Encourage your child to drink a glass of water after eating the candy to rinse the extra sugar and acid from their teeth. Agree on a reasonable number of days to enjoy the candy. Do not forbid or hide candy from kids. It will make them want it more.
- ❖ Parents should be good role models by eating very few candies themselves.
- ❖ Take leftover candy to your work to share with co-workers, store the candy away for another event or Christmas, buy some or all of the candy back from your child or throw it away.

Many of the tips were obtained from [nourishinteractive.com](http://nourishinteractive.com).