

# Halloween candy... a sticky topic for parents!

Year after year, our children bring home oodles of candy after a spooky night of entertainment. And every year we ask "Should I let my children eat all this candy?" Here's the good news... letting children include these goodies as a part of a healthy diet will help them manage their Halloween stash. After trick or treating, let your children empty their bag, gloat over it, and sort it. Let them do the same the next day. Then have them put the candy away and only allow them to eat it at meal and snack time: a couple of small pieces at meals for dessert and some for snack time. If they can follow these rules, children get to keep control of the stash. Otherwise you do, on the condition that as soon as they can manage it, they get to keep it. Offer milk, fruit or vegetables with the candy, and at least you will have a chance at some nutrition. The key is to provide structure... schedule meals and snacks at regular times and keep the routine of letting your child have Halloween candy only at meals and snacks, while continuing your parental role in choosing the rest of the food served. With this foundation, candy won't spoil a child's diet or make them unhealthy. Of course, you can minimize the issue by limiting the amount of candy they collect to one bag... instead of two or three pillowcases!



Adapted from *Your Child's Weight Helping Without Harming Birth through Adolescence*. Elyn Satter, 2005 and materials produced by York Region Health Services.



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