



| BY JUDY CAPLAN, MS, RD }

No matter how hard you try, it is almost impossible to avoid candy at Halloween! Candy at Halloween is like Easter eggs at Easter, gelt at Hanukah and candy canes at Christmas. It is a fact of life. So this year, instead of battling with the kids over when, where and how to eat the candy, here are some suggestions that might help sweeten this ghoulish holiday.

Limit the container size:

With young children it is easy to control the amount of candy by limiting the container size. Pick a small plastic pumpkin with a strong handle or a mini-sized

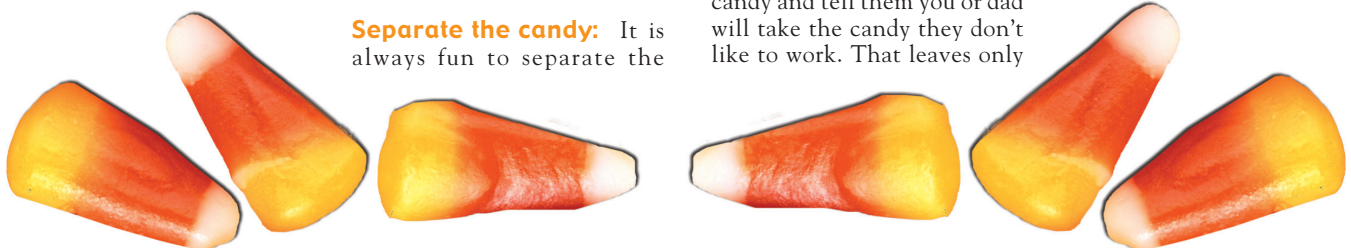
shopping bag. Make a rule that kids have to carry their own candy. This will help limit the amount. When they start complaining that the container is too heavy, it's time to go home.

Separate the candy: It is always fun to separate the

candy when kids get home. They can make piles of ones that are not acceptable, like unwrapped or damaged candy, types they love, and kinds they dislike. Throw out the inedible candy and tell them you or dad will take the candy they don't like to work. That leaves only

the candy they want.

You can take this sorting process a step further and look for candy that contains



partially hydrogenated or Trans fats. These types of fats are artery clogging fats. So if much of the favorite pile is full of hydrogenated fats, this would be a good time to cut back on other artery clogging fats like French fries, nuggets and burgers.

Limit the amount: The first few days most kids go hog wild eating candy but then it usually tapers off. In fact, by week two many kids have forgotten about the candy all together. If the candy obsession lasts more than a week or two, it can be helpful to set up guidelines to deal with the remaining supply. Limiting candy to a piece or two after dinner is a good idea. If it is not gone by Thanksgiving, throw it out!

After the first few days, do not allow your kids to bring candy to school. Many schools have policies prohibiting bringing in Halloween candy at all.

Brush your teeth: This is an opportunity to explain to kids how cavities form. Tell them they need to brush their teeth within a few minutes of eating candy because the sugar in the candy reacts with bacteria in their mouths to form acids which attack the teeth causing cavities. If you have not already banned sodas from the house, this might be a good time to start.

Adjust snacks: Since you know your kids will be eating candy, if not theirs probably someone else's, make snacks

healthy. Offer sliced fresh fruit, Trans fat-free popcorn, low-fat cheese sticks, fresh veggies and hummus, or whole grain pretzel sticks. Don't keep

intake. Avoid pasta, potatoes, rice, and breaded foods. Don't send packaged snacks to school. Eat more protein, vegetables, and healthy fats

carbohydrate serving, or the equivalent of one slice of bread. Look on the label of a candy package in their pile. See how many grams of carbohydrates are in one package or one piece. If you know 15 grams is one serving, you can figure out how many carbohydrate servings your child is eating in candy. The average young child who is fairly active needs about 90 grams of carbohydrates from grains, beans, breads, potatoes, crackers, and sweets. That is about six servings in a day. So if you figure they are eating two to three servings of carbohydrates from candy, 30 - 45 grams, limit the healthier carbs to about three servings per day. A serving is usually 1/3 cup cooked of pasta or rice, 1/2 of a baked potato, 1/2 cup of cereal, 1 tortilla, or 1/2 cup of beans.

While this may seem like a lot of work, it beats the alternative of turning into a witch by disallowing candy. Candy at Halloween, as long as kids are eating other healthy food, will not permanently ruin your child's health. This balanced approach leads to happy memories and a Halloween cease fire. **wFm**



sweets like ice cream or other sugared snacks around at this time.

Adjust meals: During the first week or so, make meals that are lower in carbohydrates to adjust for the extra candy

like olive oil, avocado and nuts.

Avoid extra calories: Obviously candy contains calories and carbohydrates. Here is a helpful hint: 15 grams of carbohydrates equal one

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