

Halloween doesn't have to be scary

“Out of sight, out of mind” is a good policy when it comes to candy. By minimizing the amount of junk food in your home, you minimize the temptation to eat it. That’s normally an effective plan – but it all goes out the window when it comes to Halloween.

As the holiday approaches, it’s hard to avoid those sweet confections. If candy is not in your home, your office, or your school, it’s in a bowl at the dry cleaner’s, the doctor’s office, and possibly even the gym!

When you have to monitor your carbohydrate intake to manage healthy blood sugar levels, it can seem like Halloween time is a surefire way to derail your efforts. But don’t worry, with a few easy tricks you’ll be able to handle those treats.

Plan ahead

Make sure to eat regular meals, including breakfast. It will keep you satiated, and reduce the risk of grabbing a piece of candy because it’s convenient and you’re hungry.

If you buy candy to give out to trick-or-treaters, keep it under wraps until Halloween. If your co-workers have candy at work, you can politely ask them to move it out of your arm’s reach.

Chances are at some point during the Halloween season you will break

down and have a piece of candy. Most of us will indulge a bit but that’s okay, especially if you’re smart about what you’re eating, and if you prepare for it.

Look at the Nutrition Facts panel on the package, or look up the snack online if you don’t have access to the label. Identify the grams of carbohydrate the treat contains. Many snack-size candies have 15 to 30 grams of carbohydrates, which is equal to one to two carb servings.

Talk to your health care team about your desire to have a small treat once in a while throughout the Halloween season and how to best incorporate it into your meal plan. If you take insulin at mealtime, you may be able to adjust your dose accordingly to compensate for the additional carbohydrates. Or you may be able to replace one of your traditional carbohydrate servings for a small piece of candy. As long as this exchange is done infrequently, it shouldn’t have a negative impact on blood sugar or overall health.

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES

While an infrequent indulgence around Halloween time won’t have too much of a negative impact, if those indulgences start to become a bit more frequent, they can begin to increase blood sugar levels and body weight. Swap the sweet treats out for smarter options such as:



Air-popped
popcorn



Individually-wrapped
packages of freeze-
dried fruit with no added
sugars



Individual servings of
nuts and seeds

The big challenge: Trick-or-treating and beyond!

The aftermath of Halloween can be more difficult to manage than the holiday itself. If you have kids who trick-or-treat, large quantities of candy will be in your house, probably for an extended period of time. And let's face it: Our kids may collect it, but we all consume it.

But never fear! We have suggestions for that as well. Set some Halloween ground rules – as much for your benefit as for your kids! Diabetes or not, this is a healthier way to approach candy consumption.

- Make sure everyone starts in the morning with a healthy breakfast and eats regular meals throughout the day. That way, high or low blood glucose won't interrupt the festivities, and you'll lower their (and your!) likelihood of eating candy.
- No eating the trick-or-treat candy until you get home.
- Have your children pick their favorite types of candy, and get rid of the rest.
- Portion out the candy. Your children can enjoy a few pieces of candy throughout the week. For children with diabetes, Halloween can be a good time to teach them the basics of carb counting and insulin dosing. Give the same limits to all children in your household when it comes to candy and sweets. No one should be eating 10 pieces of candy in one sitting anyway!
- Allow your children to trade pieces of their candy for something not food-related, such as a movie ticket, trip to the zoo, a new toy, money, or a gift card. This can help redefine the word "treat." Decide on the "value" of each piece of candy ahead of time.
- You can donate the extra candy to a variety of different community groups or to a local children's hospital. There are even programs for donating candy to troops overseas. These are great ways to get your child excited about giving back.
- Healthy holiday foods can substitute for sugary treats. A strawberry dipped in dark chocolate or "ants on a log" (celery spread with peanut butter and topped with

Candy	Calories	Fat (g)	Carbs (g)
Snickers, fun size	80	4	10.5
Snickers, mini	43	1.6	4.4
3 Musketeers, fun size	63	2	11
3 Musketeers, mini	24	0.7	5
Skittles Original, fun size mini	60	0.5	14
Butterfinger, fun size	100	4	15
Butterfinger, mini	45	2	7.25
Candy Corn, 1 oz.	100	0	25.6
Milky Way, fun size	80	3	12
Milky Way, mini	38	1.6	6
Almond Joy, snack size	80	4.5	10
Almond Joy, mini	67	3.6	8
Hershey's Kiss, 3 pieces	67	4	8.3
Kit Kat, snack size	70	3.6	9
Kit Kat, mini	18	2	5.6
Reese's Peanut Butter Pumpkin	170	10	18
Twix, fun size	80	4	10
Twix, mini	50	2.6	6.6
Peanut M&M's, fun size	90	5	10.5
M&M's, fun size	73	3.3	10.6
York Peppermint Patty	140	2.5	31
York Peppermint Patty, mini	50	1	11
Tootsie Roll	23	0	4.6
Charms Blow Po	60	0	17
Jolly Rancher	23	0	5.6
Smarties roll	25	0	6

a few raisins) are better than eating candy. Kids love to cook with their parents, so you can prepare the holiday treats together.

- Emphasize non-candy fun. You can create new family traditions around costumes, pumpkin carving, and spooky decorations that everyone will enjoy year after year. There are plenty of things besides eating candy that children as well as adults can do to safely take part in the festivities.

With a little planning and creativity, everyone in your family can enjoy all of the festivities of Halloween while keeping their health in check. Have a happy and safe Halloween!

Sources:
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