



Don't be caught looking like a pumpkin –How to avoid Halloween's sweet temptations

by Monica Ehlers

This is the time of year that I call the beginning of the “Candy train”. From now until May, you can bet that every stationary, grocery, convenience and drug store will offer brightly colored displays of candy to commemorate monthly holidays, from Halloween to Mother's Day and everything else in between.

Getting on that Candy train can be a fast ride to a point of no return and a new larger-sized wardrobe. Let's face it, sugar can be addictive and once you're hooked, it can be really hard to stop the indulging, even when the holidays are long gone.

Here are some tips to get you through Halloween:

1. *Don't buy candy until the last minute.* Even if stores are offering 2-for-1 deals on bags of candy, the amount of money you will save is meager. How much is a larger pair of pants going to cost you after Halloween? The savings don't seem too sweet any more, do they? Buy Halloween candy on Halloween, right before you are set to give it out. If you are a planner and that sounds too hectic for you, place the candy in the trunk of your car and leave it there until Halloween Day.

2. *Buy candy you don't like.* I've never understood the idea of giving a gift to someone that you'd actually like to receive. Why torture yourself?

3. *Don't overbuy candy.* It is better to run out of candy and turn off your light early than it is to be left with a huge bowl of candy that's beckoning you to eat it. Decide what your “turn off” time is for trick-or-treaters. Fifteen minutes before that time, if there is a lot of candy left, start giving out larger amounts. If there is still candy left, leave the bowl on your doorstep. You can almost guarantee that nothing will be left in the morning.

4. Avoid the “drive by’s”. Temptation can be everywhere, be it a bowl of candy on a co-worker’s desk to cupcakes at a preschool party. Your best line of defense is to avoid the location of the temptation altogether. E-mail your co-worker instead of dropping by her desk for a chat, or ask her to come to your cubicle. Better yet, go for a walk and catch up at lunch. While at the preschool or classroom party, steer clear from that table of treats. Talk with other parents AWAY from the food. Be mindful not to do the opposite and talk while eating treats.

5. Don’t skip meals! Nothing is worse than substituting a meal with candy. Nothing!!! Not only will it leave you with no energy, it’s just plain bad for you. The refined sugar of candy offers you very little nutrition, not to mention a high that will leave you crashing and hungrier than ever about an hour later. When you hit that point, guess what you’re going to crave even more of? Eat a normal meal, then eat a snack-sized version of that candy bar, or cut it in half. Treat it like a dessert.

6. Take the kids trick-or-treating. My kids go out three times on this special night and I make sure to go with them. I let my husband pass out the candy while I get to see all the great costumes and how frightfully festive the neighborhood is.

7. Recycle your kids’ candy. Three times out on Halloween means a pillowcase full of candy. At first, I thought my kids wouldn’t want to dump what they just acquired into our bowl. But they were thrilled because it meant they got to pass out the candy to the older kids, who come later in the evening. I let my girls choose seven pieces each and the rest go right into the bowl. I send one piece to school with them in their lunches. If they only have seven pieces, it makes it super difficult to say, “Oh they won’t miss this one if I eat it.” A good rule of thumb is to go by age until they hit 7. For instance, a 4 year-old would get four pieces.

8. Treat yourself. Halloween wouldn’t be half as fun if you couldn’t indulge just a little bit. Before your kids recycle their candy, choose one of your favorites from each of their stashes and set it aside for yourself. See? You didn’t have to go out and buy a bag of your favorites because your kids already had them waiting for you☺.

9. *If you have leftover candy, donate it.* Dental offices love to collect Halloween candy. Some will even pay per pound for whatever is brought in. Other places include homeless shelters, assisted living centers and schools who collect to give to others.

Hopefully these tips will help you from “goblin” up too much candy. Stay safe and have a wonderful Halloween!