

## With Tips from TOPS: Halloween Doesn't Have to Be a Fright for Your Waistline

Written by Editor

Monday, 31 October 2011 12:39

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MILWAUKEE, WI – Healthy and Halloween are not often used in the same sentence. Halloween is usually seen as a time to get dressed up, gather sugary treats, and enjoy the spookiness of the season. TOPS Club, Inc. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly), the nonprofit weight loss support organization, provides tips to stock the kids' bags with better treats, host a healthy party, and more. ***Give Better Trick-or-Treating Goodies***

It's inevitable that kids will receive candy, so parents should take steps to limit sugar consumption. Feeding children a nutritious meal before trick-or-treating will help curb their urge to snack on sweets. Once the candy is home, adults can let kids pick out their favorite pieces and decide how much to have each day. The remaining candy can be put out of sight, donated to charity, or thrown away. This helps parents from overindulging, too.

Neighbors can promote healthier habits and offer alternatives to candy, so kids can enjoy the spooky evening without sacrificing nutrition. Here are some ideas to give to trick-or-treaters:

Skip the sweets and sugar and provide healthier options.

- Animal crackers
- Granola bars

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- Snack-size bags of pretzels
- Trail mix      • Graham crackers
- Microwave popcorn
- Sugar-free gum
- Small boxes of raisins

### ***Give treats that encourage playing rather than eating.***

- Bouncy balls      • Sidewalk chalk
- Temporary tattoos   • Crayons
- Fun pencils and fancy erasers
- Yo-yos      • Spider rings
- Glow sticks

### ***Throw a Healthy Halloween Party***

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There are numerous treats and fall activities that can be incorporated into a Halloween party. Plan an event that gets guests of all ages moving and fills them with fun, good-for-you snacks.

- Replace sugary treats with nutritious party snacks. Apples with caramel or yogurt dip, roasted pumpkin seeds, apple cider, pumpkin muffins, a vegetable "skeleton," a melon carved like a brain, and seasoned pretzels are some fall-themed options that everyone can enjoy.

Make a vegetable skeleton at your next Halloween festivity:

1. Gather red pepper, a handful of carrot sticks, broccoli, some green beans, cherry tomatoes, a cucumber, celery sticks, cauliflower, or other vegetables.

2. Get creative and assemble the skeleton. You could use the sliced red pepper as its rib cage. The cauliflower can serve as the skeleton's hands and feet, and the carrots and celery could form its shoulders, arms, and legs. Use the bowl of dip as its head.

- Get moving. Bob for apples, pin the nose on the witch or the pumpkin, go on a scavenger hunt, walk through a haunted house, or participate in a fall relay race.

- Shift kids' focus from food to an activity. Have craft stations where children can create masks out of paper plates, make slime, color, and more.

Halloween is time for slime, according to Disney's [familyfun.go.com](http://familyfun.go.com):

1. Materials: Two mixing bowls, measuring cups, spoons, glue, borax, green food coloring, and water.

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2. Instructions: Mix together 3/4 cup warm water, one cup glue, and several drops of green food coloring in the first bowl. Using the second bowl, combine four teaspoons borax and 1 1/3 cups warm water. Pour the contents of the first bowl in the second bowl. Do not stir. Let it stand for one minute, then lift the "slime" out of the bowl. Use plastic bags to store the slime. Keep away from children under three years old.