

## Halloween treats okay with a few tricks of the trade

October 12 2010, By Kate Yerxa

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For many adults and children, the idea of Halloween without candy is a frightening one. But Kate Yerxa of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension says there are several ways to both limit the amount of post-Halloween candy sitting around the house and also cut down on consumption while still celebrating the tradition of holiday treats.

“[Halloween](#) only comes once a year,” says Yerxa, Extension’s statewide educator for nutrition and physical activity. “Keep practicing your family’s healthy habits, like eating well and good oral hygiene, and a few days with a moderate amount of added candy will not derail your path to living healthy.”

There are a number of tactics parents can take in order to keep kids from eating a lot of candy Halloween night. Yerxa recommends feeding children a healthy pre-trick or treat snack such as whole wheat crackers with either nut butter or sliced cheese, along with a fruit or vegetable. If kids are not hungry when they return home with their loot, Yerxa says, they are less likely to overeat.

For the days following Halloween, Yerxa says parents can also make a plan with children about how much of their candy they are allowed to eat each day. Then, parents can divide the candy into individual serving sizes and put it away in a cabinet.

Yerxa recommends checking with local dentists or health-care providers to find out if they offer an exchange day where kids can exchange their

Halloween candy for a non-food gift. Families can also plan their own exchanges. She also reminds parents to inspect candy for safety before a child eats it. Yerxa advises those who are giving out [candy](#) not to pre-purchase a huge amount of sweets that will be tempting in the days following the holiday.

Healthy edible Halloween treats include small bags of pretzels, dried fruit such as raisins or dried cranberries, seeds such as sunflower or pumpkin, and sugarless gum. Other ideas for Halloween treats include small canisters of Play-Dough or bubbles, pencils, stickers, party favors, and temporary tattoos.

Provided by University of Maine

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