

Healthy Halloween Treats and Eats

Halloween is just around the corner, but that doesn't mean you have to be spooked by the sweets your child will be consuming. With preparation and help from Healthy Texas' [Dinner Tonight](#), you can ensure that your child makes smart, healthy choices this Halloween.

The holidays are a perfect time to have valuable teaching lessons with your child about the importance of eating in moderation and what can happen if you consume too many sweets. This Halloween explain to your child that the candy they receive while trick or treating does not have to be eaten all at once, but can be spread out over time. Rather than keeping all the candy, you can also have your child pick out their personal favorites and then donate the rest to a food bank or put in a care package to be sent to those serving our country overseas.

Not all Halloween treats have to be candy, either. Instead offer something that provides health benefits and has nutritional value. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends mixing in healthy alternatives in your candy bowl that are full of whole grains, vitamins, 100 percent fruit juice, and fiber. Below are some examples you can find at your local grocery store:

- Whole-grain cheddar flavored crackers
- Fruit snacks made with 100 percent fruit with added vitamin C
- Fruit leathers made with 100 percent fruit
- Sugar-free gum
- Animal crackers made without trans fat
- Mini rice cereal bars
- Cereal bars made with real fruit
- Individual fruit cups
- Mini 100 percent fruit juice boxes
- Low-fat pudding
- Mini bags of pretzels

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics also recommends avoiding snacks that contain nuts in case a child suffers from food allergies. In such circumstances, non-food treats such as pencils, erasers, stickers, or tattoos can act as a fun alternative.

In addition to limiting the amount of sweet treats your child eats this Halloween, finger foods are also a great option and help to encourage healthy eating Dinner Tonight's Pumpkin Nachos are the perfect Halloween treat packed full of vitamins and flavor. You can also get creative by making a jack-o-lantern out of cantaloupe, kiwi and blackberries, or a skeleton out of veggies and a low-fat dip.

Pumpkin Nachos

4 cups fresh pumpkin or butternut squash cubed
2 tablespoons olive oil
¼ teaspoon black pepper
1 13 ounce package blue corn tortilla chips baked

1 5-ounce can, low sodium black beans drained.
2 cups low fat mozzarella cheese

Optional toppings:

Fresh cilantro diced
Green onion diced
Guacamole
Fresh lime juice

Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Place cubed pumpkin in baking sheet, drizzle with olive oil, Sprinkle with pepper and coat evenly. Roast for 30 minutes, until pumpkin is tender. Reduce oven to 350 degrees.

Use cooking spray to cover 9 x 13 inch baking pan. Layer the chips, pumpkin, beans, salsa and cheese in the pan. Repeat. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes or until the cheese is melted. Add toppings of your choice and serve

1 cup serving is about 250 calories.