



Tanya Davis
Texas AgriLife Extension Service
County Extension Agent – Family and Community Health
206 S. State Street, Suite A
Decatur, Texas 76234
Ph: 940.627.3341 Fax: 940.627.8070

Wise Notes for Consumers

Submitted: 10-19-18

Trunk or Treat and Halloween Activities

Trunk or Treat and Halloween activities are festive days that kids enjoy, because they get dressed up and get treats. For health-conscious parents, these days can be tricky. Do you set limits? Do you let kids decide how much to eat? I found advice on the KidsHealth.org and Clemson Cooperative Extension websites that I thought worthy of passing along.

There isn't just one right answer. Instead, use your best judgment based on your child's personality and eating habits. Kids who generally eat just a couple of pieces and save the rest might be trusted to decide how much to eat. But if your child tends to overdo it, consider setting limits. Here are some more tips for handling the treats:

- Before kids go trick-or-treating, try to serve a healthy meal so they're not hungry when the candy starts coming in.
- Know how much candy your child has collected and don't store it in his or her bedroom. Having it so handy can be an irresistible temptation for many kids.
- Consider being somewhat lenient about candy eating on Halloween, within reason, and talk about how the rest of the candy will be handled. Candy and snacks shouldn't get in the way of kids eating healthy meals.
- If a child is overweight — or you'd just like to reduce the Halloween stash — consider buying back some or all of the remaining Halloween candy. This acknowledges the candy belongs to the child and provides a treat in the form of a little spending money.
- Be a role model by eating candy in moderation yourself. To help avoid temptation, buy your candy at the last minute and get rid of any leftovers.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national orientation. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

- Encourage your kids to be mindful of the amount of candy and snacks eaten — and to stop before they feel full or sick.

You also can offer some alternatives to candy to the trick-or-treaters who come to your door.

Here are some treats (individually wrapped items are best) you might give out:

- treats to promote physical activity like bouncy balls, jump ropes, sidewalk chalk, or plastic/foam fliers;
- snacks such as small bags of pretzels, sugar-free gum, sugar-free candy, trail mix, small boxes of raisins, and popcorn;
- small boxes of cereal, cereal bars animal crackers;
- non-food treats, like stickers, toys, temporary tattoos, false teeth, little bottles of bubbles and small games, like tiny decks of cards (party-supply stores can be great sources for these);
- consider being a part of the Teal Pumpkin Project which has raised awareness of those children with food allergies and their struggles to enjoy trick or treating. You can take part in this project by providing non-food treats and displaying a teal pumpkin in front of your home/vehicle trunk to indicate to passersby that you have non-food treats available.

Steer clear of any snacks or toys — like small plastic objects — that could pose choking hazards to very young children.

And remember that Trunk or Treat/Halloween, like other holidays, are a single day on the calendar. If your family eats sensibly during the rest of the year, it will have a more lasting impact than a few days of overindulgence.

For additional information on children’s health, contact Texas A&M AgriLife Extension’s Wise County Extension office at 940/627-3341.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national orientation. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.