

# **Healthy Halloween is in the Bag**

*by Pamela Fay*

It's not just that fun-sized pieces of Halloween candy contain up to 80 sugary calories, according to USA Today. It's that a dozen pieces in one sitting can really add up, particularly for small children. Halloween party favors don't have to be bad for you. They also don't have to be edible. With a little imagination, there are plenty of ways to celebrate Halloween while keeping the sugar consumption down.

## **Freaky Fliers and Protein Treats**

Children enjoy dyed hard-boiled eggs for Easter. So, there's no reason why this healthy snack can't take center stage at a Halloween party, as well. Die eggs orange to make ghost heads and cover them with gauzy material to make an ethereal spirit. In addition to eggs, turkey and beef jerky are hearty protein treats that kids may enjoy. Wrap them in orange pumpkin paper if you can't find Halloween-themed treats. Pumpkin seeds are another rich source of protein that celebrate the holiday. Make freshly roasted pumpkin seeds and include them in a healthy trail mix. Include orange candy-coated peanuts in the trail mix, as well.

## **Old Fashioned Popcorn Balls, Dried Fruit**

Popcorn is full of fiber. You can improve this traditional Halloween treat by substituting low fat popcorn and replacing the corn syrup with brown sugar in your favorite recipe. Whole grain cereal bars are good sources of fiber when filled with apples, an autumn harvest fruit. Whole fruits such as kumquats and pears are good sources of fiber. But, dried fruits are even better. You need not limit dried fruit to raisins, according to Self Nutritional Data. Try dried apples, persimmons, orange peels, and bananas, as well.

## **Severed Orange Monster Fingers**

Carrots and other vegetables are healthy snacks that kids like. But, they may not be welcome as a replacement for more traditional Halloween goodies. Attach sliced almonds to them to turn baby carrots in to monster fingers for a scary party favor. Celery is another kid-friendly favorite. Stuff celery sticks with peanut butter and raisins to them to make spiders on a log. Or, oven bake thick sweet potato chips and put individual servings in orange cellophane bags.

## **Spider Web Cookies**

Cookies can be included among your Halloween favors if you watch the serving size. As a base for Halloween decorations, select cookies that are low in sugar. Remember, when you decorate cookies, you add even more sugar. A thin chocolate wafer such as those served with ice cream is perfect. These cookies have only a few grams of sugar each and less than 30 calories. You only need one and a tube of decorator icing to make each spider web cookie favor. Purchase graham and other lower-sugar cookies and crackers in individual serving sizes to add to the Halloween favor stash.

### **Mind and Body Toys**

Toys, such as fake spiders and other spooky critters are fun. But, for a healthy Halloween favor select small toys that keep kids physically and mentally active. For example, include a box of chalk for hopscotch or a paddle-and-ball set. Buy mini puzzle games such as color or number block cubes at party favor stores. Sudoku books are popular and a fun way to practice and learn logic. Look for Halloween themed colors.

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