



Action kit for parents

WHAT IS GREEN HALLOWEEN®?

Green Halloween is a non-profit, grassroots community initiative to create healthier and more earth-friendly holidays, starting with Halloween.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF “GREEN”?

Although many people associate green with sustainability, we believe that no discussion of sustainability is complete without also discussing healthy people and healthy communities. That's why we've developed the “3Gs” of being green:

1. **Good for People** - Including the people who make, grow or sell the products we consume or use. Also good for us and our families. Healthy treats and treasures fall under this category.
2. **Good for Planet** - Including making choices that have the least impact on the Earth during the lifespan (beginning to end) of that choice or product.
3. **Good for the Community** - Including making choices and supporting companies whose business practices and products support the well-being of communities, for example monetary contributions to worthy causes.

When planning your holiday, whether you're considering costumes, food, activities or décor, try to include at least one of the 3Gs in each of your decisions. If you can include more, fantastic! But we also recognize that everyone needs to start somewhere and that busy parents are looking for easy and clear ways to make a difference, so our 3Gs were also developed to help on-the-go people with some simple guidelines.

WHY SHOULD PARENTS CARE ABOUT GREENING HALLOWEEN AND OTHER HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS?

- This generation of kids has a life expectancy that is shorter than their parents.
- The EPA considers that 60% of all herbicides, 90% of all fungicides and 30% of all insecticides found in non-organically grown foods are carcinogenic.
- Over 6,000 synthetic chemicals are used in the processed-food industry.
- A 2004 study found that children's behavior measurably improved after a one week diet without preservatives and artificial colors and dramatically worsened on the weeks they were given preservatives and artificial colors.

- Coco beans used for chocolate that are grown in full sun (as opposed to shade) are susceptible to disease and therefore require heavy doses of toxic pesticides and synthetic fertilizers.
- The chocolate industry has engaged in the use of child slaves and other unethical treatments of growers.
- Store-bought costumes, makeup and accessories may contain phthalates, lead and other toxins.

WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Green Halloween is a community initiative. It will only succeed if individuals and families decide to take part and do something differently starting this year. Whether it's switching from conventional candy to honey-sticks, creating your own costumes, or just spreading the word, everyone can play a role. Here are some quick ideas:

- Download a "[neighborhood action kit](#)" from our website to inform friends, family, and neighbors about Green Halloween.
- Contribute by donating time to help make Green Halloween a sustainable success in your area.
- Show your support by going to our website and adding your home, school or business to our Green Halloween [map](#). Help us turn America green!
- Participate in our [forum](#)
- Join our Green Halloween newsletter mailing list (from our homepage), our Facebook [fan page](#), and on [Twitter](#) at "CelebrateGreen"

What you can do with your own family to make Halloween healthier for kids and the planet:

It's important to talk to your children about creating a Green Halloween. Getting their buy-in is essential to making your efforts a success. Be positive! "We're going to have a lot of fun this year experimenting with our treats," is sure to receive a more positive response than, "We're not giving out regular candy this year." Same with costumes. Instead of, "We're not buying you a costume at the store this year," start the conversation with, "How could we make you the greatest Halloween costume ever AND not spending a penny?" Depending on the age of your child, ask them to take a look at www.GreenHalloween.org and select from among the many treats and treasures listed there.

TREATS AND TREASURES

- Choose sweet items that are healthier (healthier people—healthier planet). Dozens of alternative ideas are available at www.GreenHalloween.org
- Choose treasures instead of conventional sweets. If you empty your kids' pockets, you know the types of treasure they hoard. But if you need more ideas, again, check out www.GreenHalloween.org
- If you want to give out conventional candy, try giving just one or two instead of handfuls

- Or offer two bowls, one with candy and the other with treasures and let kids know they can choose *one* from either
- Encourage older kids to forgo the conventional sweets and think about giving instead of taking—they can do reverse trick or treating, collect and donate cell phones or money for UNICEF.
- Compost wrappers that are compostable. Save others and see if you online to find instructions for upcycling them into cool stuff like purses. Or see if you can donate them to an artist who might fashion them into something else. Try offering them on www.Freecycle.org, www.Craigslist.org, or www.terracycle.net.

COSTUMES

Many store bought costumes (and accessories such as fake teeth, masks, face paints and jewelry) contain toxins.

- Steer clear of unnecessary exposure to lead, phthalates and other chemicals by choosing costumes made from all-natural materials such as cotton, silk, and wool and by avoiding placing anything over the face, in the mouth or on the skin.
- Forgo buying new and consider renting, buying used, borrowing, or making costumes from items found around the house or in thrift stores. Let your kids' creativity soar!

THINK dECOr

Fall is an ideal time to bring the outdoors in.

- Instead of buying decorative items, consider using colorful leaves, apples, pumpkins, gourds or straw. As a bonus, using food and items from nature creates "zero waste" when you compost them after use.
- Green décor items may also include repurposing things you already own, are borrowing, or buying used.
- Always say "no" to disposable décor and tableware.
- One other tip: use beeswax candles in your pumpkin and on your mantle. Beeswax is a renewable resource (unlike petroleum-based paraffin) and burns cleaner, too.

OTHER TIPS

- Instead of buying a new plastic pumpkin for your child to carry his loot, use the same one year after year. He can hand it down to his kids someday! Use a pillowcase, backpack, purse or other bag crafted from something you own (take a cue from the costume.)
- To light the trick-or-treating path, consider a battery-free flashlight powered by shaking or cranking (kids enjoy these).
- Feed children a full, healthy meal prior to trick-or-treating and your little ghouls and goblins will be less likely to munch on the "goodies". Healthy doesn't have to be boring! For yummy Halloween food ideas, go to www.GreenHalloween.org.

THROWING A PARTY?

In addition to the ideas above for treats and treasures, consider these alternatives for party food and activities.

FOOD

- Whenever possible, choose real, whole & organic foods.
- Feature foods that come (naturally) in orange, black and, of course, green. Olive spiders anyone?
- Make 'jack-o-lantern' oranges or 'goblin' sweet potatoes using toothpicks and raisins, cranberries, pepper strips or other items for the faces.
- Make pizzas, shish-ka-bobs and salads from Halloween colored foods.
- Make pumpkin smoothies, pumpkin seed cookies and other pumpkin-based foods.

ACTIVITIES

- Have a costume obstacle course – each student has to put on one piece of a costume at each station.
- Bring out the “Adam’s Family” music and have a “witches limbo” contest.
- Make Halloween-themed carnival cut-outs where the kids stick their heads through (and you can take a picture) or toss bean bags – made out of recycled materials such as boxes and saved for next year.
- Have a Halloween hula-hoop contest.
- Have plenty of candy wrappers on hand (collect them from year to year) and show them how to wallets, belts, picture frames, bracelets and purses (search the internet for “candy wrapper purse” for ideas).
- Collect a bunch of recycled or reused and natural objects. Make Halloween art/ décor. Choose a favorite if you like, but everyone can take home their art as a gift.
- Make face paints and have kids do their own or each other. (For instructions see www.GreenHalloween.org)
- Make “treat & treasure” bags from recycled goods (clothes, napkins, sheets) or old pillow cases.
- Make a haunted house from reclaimed or pre-owned materials. Check at an appliance store for large boxes.
- Provide recycling and composting bins and encourage guests to use them.
- Take plenty of digital pictures. After the party, put together a slide show and e-mail it to the guests.

More information

- Host a Green Halloween party: <http://greenhalloween.org/content.php?page=host>
- Money saving ideas: <http://greenhalloween.org/content.php?page=savegreen>
- Information for kids: <http://greenhalloween.org/content.php?page=kids>

Like what you see? Feel inspired?

We can't wait to see what you come up with! Let us know if you plan on taking healthy & green steps this year during your Halloween event and we can post your event on our calendar. Also, be sure to take videos and photos and send us your stories, we'd love to feature you and your students on our website.

Have more questions?

Contact: Corey Colwell-Lipson

Green Halloween Director and co-author of the book, *Celebrate Green! Creating Eco-Savvy Holidays, Celebrations and Traditions for the Whole Family*

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Hundreds of additional ideas can be found at:
www.GreenHalloween.org and www.CelebrateGreen.net

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