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Thinking outside the candy box

Making Halloween a little healthier

In October 2006, when Corey Colwell-Lipson was trick-or-treating with her daughters, she was pleased that many homes handed out non-candy treats. "They think outside the candy box!" she thought, and promised herself to return to those homes in 2007. But it was dark, and by the end of that night she had forgotten where the homes were.



Kid-friendly, non-candy treats for Halloween would be great, Colwell-Lipson thought. In 2007, she founded Green Halloween® to help make Halloween healthier for kids. The organization hopes to inspire others to "think outside the candy box."

The Institute for Applied Biomedicine, a nonprofit biotechnology firm, says the typical trick-or-treater receives 5,000 calories of candy. How can you help to reduce the calorie count? Offer children a variety of non-candy alternatives. Halloween can be healthier for all kids, and more inclusive for those with diabetes and/or other issues. In July 2003, the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* stated that trick-or-treaters aged 3 to 14 were as likely to choose toys as candy, if available.

Here are some suggestions (be cautious about what you give children three years and younger): Stickers, balloons, crayons, pencils, erasers, colored chalk, whistles, baseball cards, plastic worms, magnets, mini-books, mini-magnifying glasses, pocket-size games, glow sticks, costume jewelry, plastic glasses, fake teeth, rub-on tattoos, bottles of bubbles, small cans of Play-Doh, play money, toothbrushes, mini spiral notebooks, foam or inflatable balls, foam visors.

Toys cost more than candy, so start shopping early. Be creative. Check out craft stores and the clearance sections of department stores. Shop online; two good Internet sites (no adult content) are www.kipptoys.com and www.rinovelty.com.

FREE POSTERS: Let others know that you offer non-candy treats. Go to the WECA website, www.wecanaeyc.org; click on Food Program for posters to print and display.

Help make trick-or-treats less "tricky" for all children. Make Halloween a little healthier this year.



Credits: Clemson Extension, hgic.clemson.edu.
Green Halloween®, www.greenhalloween.org.
Institute for Applied Biomedicine, www.appliedbiomed.org, *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, www.jneb.org, Natural News.com, www.naturalnews.com.

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Website: <http://www.wecanaeyc.org/food/index.php>