



Nutrition Nibbles

Halloween Haunts



College Corner: HALT Before You Eat

It's October. There's a cool, crispness in the morning air; the days have gotten a little shorter. Hello fall. And so it begins... You know what I'm referring to. Halloween is just around the corner and bowls of candy are lurking at every turn. You can't venture down any grocery store aisle without some fun-sized sweet treat popping out at you. It's just for the month of October, right? Wrong. Halloween becomes Thanksgiving which turns into Hanukah and Christmas. Don't forget New Year's and Valentine's Day. October marks the beginning of the holiday season and for many, a season of eating, overindulging and weight gain. Don't let this time of year define your eating choices. Here are some strategies to make it through October and the beginning of November, unscathed:

1. Do NOT buy it now. Just because Halloween candy is popping up everywhere doesn't mean you need to buy it. Trick-or-treating is still a month away. Don't fool yourself by thinking if you hide the candy in the freezer or the back of the pantry, you won't eat it...you will!

2. Change what you eat at eye level. We are quick to grab what's conveniently located in front of us. What foods do you store at eye level in your refrigerator, pantry, or cupboard shelves? What foods or snacks do you display on your countertops or desk? Stock healthy, nutritious foods at eye level. A bowl of cutie oranges or a whole grain granola bar stored in your desk drawer is a good replacement for candy on your desk. A bunch of bananas is a quick grab-and-go snack from the kitchen counter. Place cherry tomatoes, berries, fresh cut carrots, celery, cucumbers, and melon front and center in your fridge for nourishing noshes.

3. Give a toy, not a treat. Consider handing out small non-candy items in place of your usual sweet treats. Erasers, bouncy balls, pencils, stickers, and temporary tattoos are fun alternatives to candy. You can find some good deals on these items at www.orientaltrading.com.

4. Offer a candy trade-in. Worried that your children's Halloween loot will be your downfall? Allow your children to keep a set number of their favorite treats, say 5 or 10, and

We all fall prey to emotional eating at some point or another. Who hasn't celebrated with a special dinner out? Who hasn't comforted their hurts with a tub of ice cream or a bag of chocolates? Show me the person who hasn't found himself crunching away on chips when stressed or angry. Being mindful of the emotions that lead us to eat is the first step in combating non-hunger and emotional eating. Try employing these strategies the next time you find yourself reaching for some comfort food:

Just HALT: Ask yourself: "Am I Hungry?" or "Is this Habit?" Many of us have paired associations that cause us to eat. For instance, always eating a snack while watching TV. The minute we sit in front of the boob tube, we're searching for something to nosh on. Then ask yourself: "Am I Angry, Anxious, overwhelmed, Lonely, bored, or Tired?" These are common emotional triggers. Whether you are feeling frustrated or fighting a habit, just HALT and work on separating non-physical or emotional hunger from true biological hunger. Here's how:

Become aware. Try keeping a food journal and rate your level of hunger each time you eat something. If you find yourself eating but notice you are not hungry, look for an emotion or habit that may be the cause. Nurture yourself without food.

**Questions or Comments? Email me at
marymahoneyrd@gmail.com**

Halloween continued...

then offer them a trade. If they hand over the rest of their treats, you will reward them with something equally appealing but less calorically-rich like a stuffed animal, coveted toy, or iTunes gift card.

5. When in doubt, throw it out! If candy ends up in your house, on your desk, and in your belly despite your best efforts, just toss it out. If you have trouble throwing away “food,” consider donating your treats to the troops. See www.operationgratitude.com for more information.

Here’s to a safe and healthy Halloween!

HALT Before You Eat continued...

Take time out of your busy schedule to do something you enjoy. Read a fun book or magazine, take a bubble bath, play basketball with your buddies. Make distraction and relaxation your new motto.

Express yourself. Learn to express your emotions and comfort yourself without eating. Talk things over with a friend, write out your feelings in a journal, or seek help from a dietitian or mental health professional. Food may mask your emotions for a small time period but will never provide the relief you are searching for.

I hope you find these tips useful. Remember, if you end up succumbing to emotional eating, do not beat yourself up. The next meal is a new opportunity to nourish your body in a way you feel good about.

Pumpkin Conspiracy?

With the change of seasons, comes a bumper crop of all-things pumpkin-related. Out come the pumpkin pie candles, pumpkin patches, and pumpkin-flavored baked goods and coffee drinks. You may have heard about the Starbucks pumpkin spice latte scandal reported in USA Today. A popular food blogger was outraged that the popular seasonal coffee drink did not contain any actual pumpkin. This was not too surprising to me and anyone else who has ever made a pumpkin pie. “Pumpkin spice” is something you add to flavor a pumpkin pie and includes cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and allspice. Never has pumpkin spice included actual pumpkin! Oops! The blogger also highlighted some of the unhealthy ingredients present in this coffee favorite including caramel coloring and sugar. While I doubt anyone consumes a pumpkin spice latte as a health drink, this serves as a good reminder that unless you create a food or beverage yourself, you never quite know what you’re getting.

If you will never again look at a pumpkin spice latte in the same way, try these tricks to enjoy the most of this season:

- **A**dd some freshly ground cinnamon and nutmeg to your coffee grounds to brew up a cup of calorie-free pumpkin spice deliciousness.

- **M**ix a dollop of unsweetened canned pumpkin into your morning oatmeal for a boost of antioxidants.
- **S**pread a thin layer of pumpkin butter along with a thin layer of low-fat cream cheese on top of a small, whole grain bagel.
- **E**njoy one of my favorite fall, pumpkin recipes--pumpkin pudding--and receive some calcium-rich protein.

Easy Pumpkin Pudding

Recipe courtesy of *Food and Health Communications*

- 1 cup canned pumpkin or pumpkin puree
- 1 package (4-serving size) sugar-free, instant vanilla pudding mix
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice*
- 1 1/2 cups skim milk

*Chef’s Tip: You can adjust the spice to your own taste by mixing nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, allspice, and ginger until you find the proportions that work best for you.

Mix all ingredients together. Place in individual bowls or glasses and chill until set.

Makes 4 servings (2/3 cup).

Per 2/3 cup: 76 calories, 0 g fat, 2 mg chol, 89 mg sodium, 15 g carb, 2 g fiber, 4 g protein, 140 mg calcium.