



Ghosts & Goblins

By Leslie Burman, L.D., R.D.

It is October 31st and you have just realized Halloween time magically reappeared. After school you and little Suzie eagerly race into one of those overpriced ‘pop up’ Halloween shops to get a last minute costume. After sorting feverously through the various sizes and costume pieces, Suzie’s slim pickings settle her on a ‘made in Japan’ Annie costume.

Racing out their front door with a California size pillowcase in hand and plan of route to acquire the most candy in the least amount of time and the Halloween fun begins. As Suzie joins together with a Cow, Harry Potter, and George Bush at her first location, all four anxiously anticipate bellowing in unison the three magic words. When the front door finally opens and a very large hairy man in a white undershirt comes out preoccupied with a cell phone conversation. Without looking up he automatically grabs a handful of hard candies and quickly drops the candies in the bags.

Simultaneously Suzie’s itchy, short-lived red Afro wig falls permanently into the pillowcase. Dressed in her ill-fitting Polyester costume that presumably makes Florida’s 90-degree heat reach 100, sweat beads begin to trickle down her hairline. Wearing plastic payless ‘mock’ patent leathers blister guaranteed shoes. Carrying nothing less than a suitcase around to be sure to fit all candy possible. There is no question and no doorbell left un-rung house (even the ones pitch black and no signs of life in sight). Suzy (and mom) are on a mission and will stop at nothing before the entire bag is filled to the brim. This evening will be defined as successful when enough candy is acquired to last them the next 3 years. Peering into the bag and delighted to see the favorites...hmmm, Baby Ruth, Butterfinger, Mr. Good bar, Outrageous, Snickers...just look at what all of this hard work gets in return! O.K. let’s see what just these 6 wonderfully rewarding items entail.

<u>Candy Bar/# oz per bar</u>	<u>Calories</u>	<u>Total Fat</u>	<u>Saturated Fat</u>	<u>Sugar</u>
Baby Ruth/2.1	280	12g	7g	25g
Butterfinger/2.1	280	11g	6g	29g
Mr. Good Bar/1.7	270	17g	7g	21g
Outrageous/1.9	290	17g	5g	23g
Snickers/2.1	280	14g	5g	30g
Total	1400	71g	30g	128g

For example, these evenings worth of Halloween nibbles are equivalent to over 6 servings of burger king French fries. In fact a single Hershey bar is equal to approximately 1/5 of your total fat and 1/2 of your total saturated fat for the entire day. Although it would be a nice thought to have had Suzy in an adorable homemade, hand sown, personalized costume excitedly eager to forgo the trick or treating in anticipation of handing out pennies,

the painful thought of cleaning egg of your front windows leads us to a compromise even Mr. Rogers would accept.

A few tips might help make Halloween more tolerable.

- How about eating dinner first to leave our heads and hearts less vulnerable while walking around the neighborhoods.
- Make up a compromise like save the candy until all is collected and choose two of your favorite pieces on Halloween night.
- When you get home make two piles and clear out the pile you want to give to a homeless shelter or nursing home for their occasional treat.
- Put the rest in the freezer and slowly dole it out as one piece of choice a day.
- Save the candy for movies or other special occasions.
- Use the candy as garnishes when making parties, gingerbread houses, and other arts and craft projects.
- Ask your child if they are will to donate their treats in exchange for a favorite toy or cash.
- Lets face it, more often than not the candy becomes the trigger for the parents just as much if not more.
- Make sure Suzy's basket is free and clear of any 'must have' foods. Try to do it discretely, though. We want to teach our kids balance between 'sometime' foods and 'all the time' foods. The healthiest way to approach this is by emphasizing the fact they can have most foods as long as it is consumed in moderation.
- Try and emphasize the fun filled atmosphere over the strong yearning to be in the Gunnies Book for reaching maximum capacity of candy consumed in one night.
- Try and have you and your child walk as apposed to golf carts. Add exercise to burn energy, decrease quantity, and increase lethargy.

Also, there is no correlation that candy causes hyperactivity. Many reputable studies have proven the widespread belief to the contrary. There is no evidence that supports sugar has an adverse effect on your children's behavior. So if Suzy starts screaming from the top of her lungs and runs from house to house, best route would be is just deny you know her. No, it wouldn't be the chocolate in the caffeine either. A solid milk chocolate has about as much caffeine as a cup of decaffeinated coffee. There is about 6-mg. of caffeine in both one ounce of chocolate and a cup of decaffeinated coffee. A cup of regular coffee has between 65 and 150 grams of caffeine.

The truth is candy does not contribute to a large percentage of fat and sugar in our diet. We consume less than 2% of our fat and ten percent of our sugar from candy.

If I had my druthers, I would question the 364 days of sugary beverages, baked goods and frozen desserts. As the 'Mad Hatters' in Alice and Wonderland, it's the Happy Un- Halloweens that are the true ghosts and goblins that come to haunt us! Be healthy and safe this Halloween!

In Good Health,

Leslie Burman, R.D., L.D.

Leslie Burman, R.D., L.D. is a Registered Dietitian, a licensed Nutritionist, and a Certified Hypnotherapist and has been working in private practice within the south Florida area. She can be reached at (561) 789-7000/Punch Fitness- (954) 428-8990.