

Halloween Smiles

Halloween is a fun time of year with all the pumpkins, goblins, tricks and treats and should be enjoyed by all. Studies show that the real problem with holidays like Halloween is that it stretches out over several weeks. Children start showing up with Halloween treats in their pockets from school from the bus and from other functions several weeks before the actual holiday itself. This addition of sweet snacks to the child's diet several times a day can have some serious effects on the child's health. During these times the children tend not to eat as well and miss out on the much needed vitamins, minerals and fiber that are in the normal diet. Also, the times sweets are ingested has an effect on your child's dental health. So increase in sugar intake provides more energy that tends to make children much more active and can even affect their sleep. What can you do as a parent? Here are a few suggestions. First, you should make an effort cut back the number of times you provide a sweet snack at home. For breakfast serves eggs instead of cereal, for snack replace cookies for a piece of fruit and water or milk instead of juice or soft drinks. Also keep your trick or treat candy out of the child's reach until Halloween night. Then when Halloween night is over discard any surplus candy. The way to handle your child's Trick-or-Treat candy is to do a safety check to ensure nothing in the candy can be harmful to the child. The soft chocolates with out caramel like M&M's, Hershey's kisses, Hershey's chocolate are better than hard or sticky candies like Now or Laters and other types of candies that stay in the mouth longer. Allow your child one or maybe two days to consume the treats then discard them. The worst thing you could possibly do is let your child save the treats and eat them over a period of days or even weeks. Also, try to be more conscientious about brushing and flossing during this high sugar intake period.

As a parent I have found this to be practical and an easy way to lessen the effects of the increase in sweet consumption that starts with Halloween and goes through the Christmas season. It also allows your family to enjoy the seasons without the worry of your children suffering from tooth decay or eating too many sweets in place of their normal diet. So relax and enjoy the season.

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