



Tips for a Healthy, Fun, and Happy Halloween -From the Seaside Health + Wellness Committee-

The Lantern Walk Festival at Seaside This week at Seaside, children and parents will recognize the changing season and gather together for the Lantern Walk Festival. As we journey into the darkest time of the year, it's increasingly important for each of us to kindle warmth and light in our hearts. The gently glowing candles from the children's lanterns remind us to let our own lights shine. As we draw nearer to the winter Solstice, our own inner lights must shine even more brightly. And as nature sleeps, we must be more wakeful in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Halloween Although Halloween will not be celebrated at the school, many families will be celebrating Halloween at home and will be trick-or-treating with their family, friends, and neighbors. Many of us parents are uncertain on how to celebrate a holiday that centers around candy when throughout the year we work so hard to encourage healthy habits in our kids. *Have no Fear! Don't get spooked about all the candy your kids will bring home on Halloween. Here are some tips so you and your kids can have fun (and enjoy the candy too!).*

Everything in Moderation Children learn how to manage their intake of candy and sweets when they are given opportunities to eat treats. Children who are permitted to eat reasonable amounts of occasional sweets or other treats during family meals or snacks learn to eat them in moderation. However, when treats or candy are restricted, children tend to overeat these "forbidden" foods whenever they are given access to them. And they will fill-up on these forbidden foods even when they are not hungry.

Learning Opportunity Parents can help their children with eating treats in moderation by giving them independence in managing their own candy. Halloween is a great time to do this! When your child asks for more candy on Halloween night, let them decide how much they should eat. Ask questions like, "What does your tummy say? Are you feeling full? Will your tummy feel sick if you eat more?" Allow your children to enjoy their candy, be responsible for their own eating, and learn how to tune into those internal cues and messages their bodies are sending them.

Still Too Much Candy? So, your kids end up with a ton of candy, enough to last until next year's Halloween. Here are some tips.

- Give your children a smaller treat bag when trick or treating. They'll bring home fewer treats in a small bag than they would in a large pillowcase.
- Allow them to eat one or two pieces of candy with a meal or snack for a couple weeks. Offer the candy along with healthy foods, meals, or snacks (such as an apple, a banana, grapes, nuts, carrots, cucumbers). This is a good time to teach about eating treats in moderation.
- Trade the candy in at a dentist office where they offer a buy-back program.
- Out-of-sight, out-of-mind. Decide where you will store the candy for an occasional treat. Treats are less tempting when they are out of sight.
- Donate the candy to a homeless shelter, children's hospital, or care package program for troops overseas. Let the kids be involved in giving their candy to others.
- Tell your children the story of the Sugar Sprite and have the Sugar Sprite visit your home (the story is included below).

Most importantly, have fun! For many children, Halloween is their favorite holiday! Trick or treating is fun! Eating candy is fun! And that is just fine. Halloween is once a year. Enjoy the holiday and enjoy the candy with your family. Don't feel guilty about enjoying it and don't teach your kids to feel guilty about it either. Remember, eating candy on Halloween is not going to replace regular eating of healthy meals the rest of the year.

And remember to brush their teeth!

The Story of the Sugar Sprite

As the weather becomes colder, and Halloween draws near, the Sugar Sprite Fairy requires more sugar to keep warm than she needs in the summer months. She knows that on Halloween, thousands of children will participate in an old custom we know as trick-or-treating, going door to door to collect sugary sweets. Because of this special ritual, there will be mountains of sweet and sugary candy in abundance. This is great news for the Sugar Sprite, and exactly what she needs to feed herself and her sweet family.

On All Hallows Eve, or Halloween as most of us now call it, the children are so excited that often they get careless – as they run door to door, they drop many pieces of candy – and The Sugar Sprite and all of her helpers are there to collect them. Yes, some children do sample some candy along the way while walking around in the cold night air, and it does tend to keep them warmer and more excited to keep on going door to door!

Some lucky children, those who know of The Sugar Sprite's existence, place their candy at the foot of their beds (or outside the front door) before going to sleep. During the night, the friendly Sugar Sprite comes and takes the candy – and more often than not, she leaves a wonderful gift of thanks. This is almost always a wonderful new toy, some beautiful silks and playclips, or that special something the child has been wishing for (after all, a Sugar Sprite is a Fairy, which means she knows exactly what it is you have been wishing!)

Yes, the Sugar Sprite knows what all children like, but sometimes the children write letters or make pictures for the sprite about a week before Halloween so she doesn't get confused (she has to visit a lot of children to collect enough sugar for the coming winter!)