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No Tricks ... Just Treats

The auburn trees are burning with fall leaves over-head. The traditions of the harvest season are now upon

us. The air is crisp and fresh with the frosted mornings. It's October. It's Indian corn, pumpkins, apple cider, red leaves, and everything seems to be orange, black and sweet.

All children love candy. When I take mine through a store, they inevitably find the chocolates and goodies conveniently placed at the cash register. October brings that love of candy to life with the dream of a night of "Trick-or-Treat-ing" fast approaching.

For the tikes, it's the best time of year. The kids get to zip around and collect as many sweet goodies as they can stuff into their undersized plastic orange pumpkins.

There are a few things that I think are important to remember on these exciting occasions:

SUGAR FLOW CONTROL

Consider the kind of candy you are giving out. Perhaps you want to buy and distribute the types of candy your family doesn't like. After it's all done you won't have sweet temptations galore laying all over your kitchen. However, you definitely want to hand out treats that the other kids like. You don't want this stuff around at Christmas or worse Valentines Day. Not only does it taste bad, it is bad for you.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Your children, as they become older they will push for more liberty. This is especially true on October 31st. An absolute must ... maintain 100% visual contact of your children at all times during the evening. Don't lose sight of who they are talking to, where they get their candy from, and how much they eat as they go.

INTAKE CONTROL

As just mentioned, be sensible with how much of the prize sugars your are rationing out to disappear into their stomachs. You're not there to spoil the fun. Monitor the binge so you don't end up at the pediatrician's office in the morning; just monitor it enough so it doesn't get out of hand. You are the best judge of when that inevitable sugar high is going to kick in and become a problem. A good fact to remember is that only 50% of the sugar from a candy bar is applied to immediate energy, the rest is stored as fat.

SHELF-LIFE CONTROL

Once back home, don't let your children store the candy in their room. If it is within easy reach you will soon see how, in the first week of November, they transform into irritable, strong willed kids with disinterest in regular meals.

OCTOBER FUN IS FABULOUS FOR FAMILIES

With all that's been said, the traditions of the Fall Season make great opportunities to spend quality time with your whole family. If at all possible, be the one to go out with them on the "Trick or Treat" hunt. Talk, laugh, play with them until their gain of parental attention has stepped up another notch on the satisfaction scale. Be a good sport and wear a funny costume as you walk around the blocks with your kids. They will love your costume more than theirs. Try and avoid barking orders, and shouting instructions - rather spend time talking to them, sharing in the fun, sampling different treats and talking about life and the good things that you enjoy together.

As the parent, you'll know the boundaries that are appropriate for your children. Give them memories of fun and companionship. Take pictures. Forge the family bond and friendship beyond their childhood years. They will grow "happy. healthy."

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