

A Healthier Halloween

Think 80:20

While occasional treats won't cause any problems, it's easy to get into the habit of eating sweet treats regularly. More than 2/3 of Irish people eat 2 or more portions of snack foods daily. This alone can be enough to gain half a stone annually. Beyond the weight repercussions, unhealthy snacks squeeze more nutritious foods out of the diet, leaving us low in essential nutrients like fibre, omega 3 fats, iron, magnesium and B vitamins.

Halloween has now become a major event to celebrate and is intrinsically linked to gorging on sweet treats. A trick or treat bag with the following contains more than one month's worth of the 15g / 3 tsp daily maximum added sugar a child is supposed to eat:

1 x 45g Starburst, 3 x Chupa Chups lollipops, 4 x Haribo mega-party mini bags, Maltesers 40g bag, Twix bar 55g, 1 x Crunchie bar, 4 x Jelly Tots minis, Swizels scary mix x 4 servings, 2 x fudge treat size, 2 x M&M minis.

For one month 15 x 31 = 465g / 93 tsp sugar. This sounds like, and is, a huge amount. However, many children will collect more than that while trick or treating and eat a good portion of it on one night alone. Many adults will do the same.

Research shows that we typically ignore nutritional information on treat foods. But knowing how much sugar is in the treats we chose is a great first step in making healthier choices.

Check food labels

- Look at 'carbohydrates of which sugar'. 4g sugar = 1 tsp
- Check serving size as some packs may contain multiple servings
- Look at the ingredient list. Avoid if sugar or any kind is in the first 3 – 5 ingredients

45g pack Starburst

NUTRITION DECLARATION	/100 g	/45 g	
ENERGY	1713 KJ 405 KCAL	771 KJ 182 KCAL	(9%) 9%
FAT	7.3 g	3.3 g	(5%)
OF WHICH SATURATES	4.1 g	1.8 g	(9%)
CARBOHYDRATE	83.9 g	37.8 g	(15%)
OF WHICH SUGARS	83.1 g	37.4 g	(42%)
PROTEIN	0 g	0 g	(0%)
SALT	0.01 g	0g	(0%)

Cadbury's Crunchie Bar (40g)

NUTRITION DECLARATION	/100 g	/45 g
ENERGY	1950 KJ / 465 KCAL	785 KJ / 187 KCAL
FAT	17.0 g	6.9 g
OF WHICH SATURATES	10.0 g	4.2 g
CARBOHYDRATE	74.0 g	29.6 g
OF WHICH SUGARS	65.0 g	26.0 g
PROTEIN	3.4 g	1.4 g
SALT	0.75 g	0.29 g

37.4 g sugar = > 9 tsp (Starburst)
26.0 g sugar = 6.5 tsp (Crunchy)

WHO recommends
< 3 tsp added sugar for children
<6-9 tsp added sugar for adults

NB This is a maximum, not a target!

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So what should we do?

- Think 80:20. Eat the right foods most of the time and enjoy **occasional, not daily** treats. Health issues and unhealthy eating habits don't happen overnight or from one occasion like Halloween. It's what we do most of the time that is important
- Have healthier options available e.g. fruit and savoury snacks
- When giving food treats to kids, make sure the size is age appropriate. Give mini bars or small ice creams

An example, with M&M's

Chocolate M&M's	Sharing bag	Standard bag	Mini bag
Size	165g	45g	20g
Calories	800 kcal	218 kcal	97 kcal
Sugar	110g (27.5 tsps.)	30g (7.5 tsps.)	13.3g (3.3 tsps.)

Some healthier options this Halloween:

- **Home-made pumpkin muffins.** We like this pumpkin and maple syrup recipe <http://cookieandkate.com/2014/healthy-maple-pumpkin-muffins/> using a little maple syrup to add sweetness
- **Ghost pizzas:** mix 2 tbsp. tomato passata and 2 tsp tomato puree in a bowl. Spread onto 2 small wholegrain tortillas / wholegrain pizza bases. Slice mozzarella ball into thin slices and trim each slice into a ghost shape (easier than it sounds!). Use pieces of olives to make eyes and red pepper or tomato pieces for mouths. Bake at 220C for 4 – 6 minutes.
- **'Pumpkin' quesadillas with slime dip:** mix grated cheddar, sliced spring onion, 1 finely chopped red pepper in a bowl. Cut pumpkin face into 1 wholegrain tortilla. Heat frying pan the same size as the tortilla. Place one complete (not cut) tortilla onto the pan, sprinkle some cheese mixture on top to cover and top with the cut out 'pumpkin' tortilla. Cook for 60 – 90 seconds on each side. Serve with guacamole and natural yoghurt mixed with garlic.
- **Mozzarella eyeballs:** toss mini mozzarella balls in a little olive oil and dried herbs. Place on a plate and top with a slice of a pitted green olive. For extra effect, fill the centre of the green olive with a tiny piece of black olive or some tapenade and place some finely sliced roast pepper strips on the 'eyeballs'. Serve with a toothpick for extra gore
- **Fruity spiders** – use dried spaghetti + 4 raisins / blackberries per leg, large red grape / dried uncoloured apricot for body, dried cranberries for eyes

For trick or treaters:

- Pumpkin satsumas – using a marker, draw pumpkin faces on easy peel mandarins / satsumas
- Small chocolate bars or buttons rather than jellies or lollypops as these usually have less sugar and cause less dental issues
- Non-food treats e.g. pencils / stickers

Have a great Halloween long weekend. From the Glenville Nutrition Ireland team