



# Don't let all that Halloween candy scare you

Is Halloween candy still lurking in your home? You're not alone -- Americans purchase nearly 600 million pounds of candy each year for Halloween! And most of us buy far more than we give away -- it's better to have too much than too little (none of us needs tricks!).

If you, like many people, tend to indulge in seasonal goodies and regret it later, it's time to refocus the way you think about Halloween (and the many other holidays that center around a profusion of sweets and treats). Even when you're succeeding with your healthy eating and portion goals, there's something about Halloween candy that tends to outsmart our best efforts. This year, don't let Halloween leftovers derail your healthy lifestyle.

When temptation strikes, take a step back to think about what's going on and how you can overcome it. The taste of victory is sweeter than any candy, so give these tips a try.

**Most Halloween candy is stuff you can get anytime, anywhere.** The date on the calendar should not pardon a Butterfinger binge or a mindless M&M marathon. Halloween week tends to be a handy excuse to overindulge in treats we would ordinarily pass up. Remind yourself that the candy is not special. Putting too much of it into your body will set you back in your health goals. Save your discretionary treats for your aunt's homemade cookies, unique gifts, or special foods you don't have regular access to.

**Get it out of your home.** Once the ninjas and Elsas transform back into children, there's a tendency for the rest of us to gobble up candy simply to end the temptation. If this rings true, consider the many ways to get it out of sight without actually eating it. You can gift it or drop it off at local businesses that service customers (barber shop, nail salon, cleaners, optician, bank, post office, etc.) You can also donate it to a dentist participating in the Halloween Candy Buyback. If you like to bake, you can use candy to decorate cupcakes, cookies, and brownies that you can gift to a friend, neighbor, or bake sale fundraiser.

**If you have kids (and their candy stash), establish rules together.** Declare your kids' Halloween candy collection off-limits to you, and enlist their help! You can store the candy in the freezer, pre-portion it for future lunchbox treats, or, if they're older, ask them to hide it from you!

**Think about how you'll feel tomorrow.** If you have one or two bites of candy, no big deal, you can get right back on the horse. But a significant lapse may have consequences that far outweigh the temporary rewards of the indulgences.

**Focus on seasonal, delicious, health-supporting meals to nourish your body.** When your diet is predominantly wholesome foods that you enjoy, you can easily focus on the pleasure they provide. When you're eating well, cravings and temptations for hyper-processed junk food tend to take a back seat.

**Take care of yourself.** As always, prioritize self-care. Stress management, adequate sleep, regular movement, and good hydration put you in the best headspace to much more easily resist unhealthy temptations.

# Dark Chocolate Covered Stuffed Dates with Nut Butter



This creation is so good -- the perfect solution when you crave a candy bar but want to stick to your healthy eating plan.

## Ingredients

- Medjool dates (pitted)
- Peanut, almond, cashew, or other nut butter
- 72%-85% dark chocolate

## Instructions:

Place the dates onto a freezer-proof plate.

Using a small spoon, fill the center of each date with your choice of nut butter (about 2 tsp per date).

Melt the chocolate on the stove top over low heat, stirring often, or in the microwave a few seconds at a time, stirring between.

Drizzle or fully cover the dates with the chocolate. Place in the freezer until chocolate hardens. Then enjoy!

These can be stored in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.