There is no shortage of sweet treats on Halloween, which can often be a nightmare for parents. It may consist of constant bargaining with their kids about how much candy they can consume. Instead of dreading the season, use it as an opportunity to teach children about leading a healthy lifestyle. TOPS Club, Inc. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly), the nonprofit weight-loss support organization, offers tips to encourage families to talk about healthy eating and candy's role in their diets.

Set Guidelines

Before the day of trick-or-treating, discuss with children the quantity and frequency they can consume their sweets and where they will be stored, so there are no surprises on Halloween. Having kids help set the candy parameters will teach them about portion control and how to incorporate treats into their everyday lives. Perhaps, they can have a few extra sweets on Halloween, but are limited to three pieces of candy each day following – only after they've finished a nutritious meal. Divide the candy into portioned bags, so it's clear what kids are allowed to eat.

Have a Conversation

Halloween is a great opportunity to talk to kids about healthy eating. Make sure to cover nutrition basics and the importance of physical activity, explaining how sweet treats can fit into their healthy habits. It is an important lesson about moderation and will help children to understand and make healthy lifestyle choices at an early age, so, hopefully, they won't struggle in the future.

Choose Favorites

The kids are going to collect numerous types of candy–suckers, chocolates, gummies, and other confections. Some treats they'll love and others they'll be able to live without. When they get home from trick-or-treating, have them sort their candy into two piles: their favorites and non-favorite treats. It demonstrates to children that they don't have to eat every piece they receive just because it's there; they should save their indulgences for desserts and candy that they absolutely love. Their less favorite treats can be saved for the future or given away. Let them help make the decision.

Serve Healthy Meals

To help curb snacking while they collect candy, serve a hearty, balanced snack or meal before they leave. Also, encourage kids to wait until they get home to eat any of their goodies.

Lead by Example

Be a role model for children and mindful of the amount of candy they are consuming. Parents may struggle with regulating candy intake, but if parents are trying to teach kids about self-control and healthy eating, it's important to practice these behaviors. Also set an example for the rest of the neighborhood by handing out healthier treats – trail mix, sugar-free gum, microwave popcorn, granola bars, graham crackers, raisins, bouncy balls, yo-yos, sidewalk chalk, and other such goodies.