



Wellness Connection

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Avoid Scary Calorie Counts This Halloween Steer clear of sweet temptations or choose mini treats over fun-size, expert suggests

(HealthDay News) -- Waiting until the last minute to buy Halloween candy is a good way to stick to a healthy diet and cut extra calories, an expert suggests, because if the candy isn't sitting around the house, you won't be tempted to eat it.

And those little bags of candy add up to extra pounds. For example, a 0.75-ounce "fun-size" bag of M&M's contains 100 calories and 3.3 grams of fat, according to a news release from EmblemHealth.



Dr. William Gillespie, a pediatrician and EmblemHealth's Chief Medical Officer, said taking the focus off candy altogether and concentrating on other Halloween activities -- such as telling spooky stories and making crafts or costumes -- is another way to encourage healthy choices.

Gillespie offered several other tips to ensure people of all ages enjoy a healthy Halloween, including:

Keep candy out of sight. Once kids enjoy a night of trick-or-treating, put their remaining candy away so they will be less likely to think about it.

Toss extra candy. Another way to limit the amount of candy kids eat is to allow them to choose a few of their favorites from their Halloween bag and get rid of the rest.

Don't be too restrictive. If candy becomes a "forbidden" treat, it may be even more tempting.

Eat before trick-or-treating. If kids fill up with a healthy meal or snack before they head out on Halloween, they may eat less candy.



Don't buy tempting candy. Adults who buy Halloween candy for their home or office should buy treats they don't actually like so they are less tempted to eat it.

Don't supersize. Buying miniature treats instead of candy that is snack size can help cut extra calories.

Here are a few examples of how choosing smaller candy can make a big difference:

- A mini 3 Musketeers bar has 24 calories, while the fun-size version has 70 calories.
- A mini Butterfinger has 45 calories, while the fun-size version has 100 calories.
- A mini Hershey's Milk Chocolate bar has 42 calories, while the fun-size version has 95 calories.
- A mini Kit Kat has 42 calories, while the fun-size version has 80 calories.
- A mini Snickers has 45 calories, while the fun-size version has 95 calories.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides more Halloween health and safety tips. <http://www.cdc.gov/family/halloween/>

-- Mary Elizabeth Dallas

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Everyday Activities May Have Same Health Benefits as Going to Gym

Study finds that more people who did short bouts of exercise met federal activity standards than those who went to gym

(HealthDay News) -- Short stretches of physical activity -- such as taking the stairs or raking leaves -- throughout the day can be just as beneficial as a trip to the gym, according to a new study.

Researchers looked at more than 6,000 American adults and found that this "active lifestyle approach" appeared to be as effective as structured exercise in providing health benefits such as preventing high blood pressure, high cholesterol and the group of risk factors known as metabolic syndrome that increases the risk for coronary artery disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

"Our results suggest that engaging in an active lifestyle approach, compared to a structured exercise approach, may be just as beneficial in improving various health outcomes," study author Paul Loprinzi said in an Oregon State University news release. "We encourage people to seek out opportunities to be active when the choice is available. For example, rather than sitting while talking on the phone, use this opportunity to get in some activity by pacing around while talking."

Loprinzi was a doctoral student at Oregon State University when he conducted the study. He is now an assistant professor of exercise science at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Ky.

The researchers also found that 43 percent of adults who did short bouts of exercise met the federal physical activity guidelines of 30 minutes a day, compared with less than 10 percent of those who did longer exercise sessions.

"You hear that less than 10 percent of Americans exercise and it gives the perception that people are lazy," study co-author Brad Cardinal, a professor of exercise and sports science at Oregon State, said in the news release. "Our research shows that more than 40 percent of adults achieved the exercise guidelines, by making movement a way of life."

The study was published in the January/February issue of the American Journal of Health Promotion.

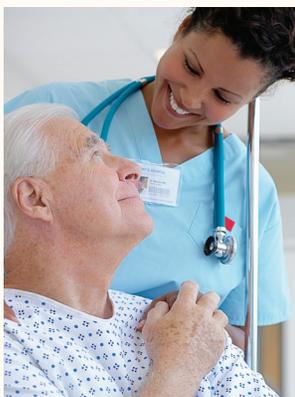
Many people say they don't get enough exercise due to lack of time. These findings are promising in that they show that simply incorporating movement into everyday activities can provide health benefits, Cardinal said.

"This is a more natural way to exercise -- just to walk more and move around a bit more," he noted. "We are designed by nature as beings who are supposed to move. People get it in their minds: 'If I don't get that 30 minutes, I might as well not exercise at all.' Our results really challenge that perception and give people meaningful, realistic options for meeting the physical activity guidelines."

More information : The U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute offers a guide to physical activity. http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/phy_act.htm
-- Robert Preidt

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Health Tip: Protect Yourself From Flu Get the annual vaccine



(HealthDay News) -- There are no guarantees that you'll never get the flu, but with these precautions suggested by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, your risk may be reduced:

- Get a flu vaccine, especially if you have a chronic health condition and are at higher risk for the flu.

- If you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, then throw it away.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- If you have the flu, try to stay away from healthy people. The CDC suggests staying home for at least 24 hours after your fever breaks.

-- Diana Kohnle

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