

Healthy People Dental

Trick or Treat

Alternative Halloween Treats

You don't need doctors and dentists to tell you that all the candy corn, chocolate, and other high-calorie goodies your kids collect at Halloween aren't healthy or good for little goblin's teeth. To stop the sweets overload this Halloween, consider handing out healthy snacks and nonedible treats like crackers, miniature toys, and temporary tattoos -- items you might find in a typical goody bag. Even if you risk provoking an eye-roll or two from trick-or-treaters, these alternative Halloween treats are creative ways for kids to celebrate the holiday without adding to the sugar rush.

Playful Plastic Jewelry

We're not talking Tiffany sparklers but plastic jewelry featuring cartoonish ghosts, black cats, pumpkins, and other creepy creatures. You can purchase them in bulk from Oriental Trading Company (144 necklaces for \$10; 144 rings for \$5.25). Looking for something a little less scary? Party City also sells colorful baubles in bulk. Pick up spiky woolly rings (\$3 per dozen) or value packs that include rings adorned with butterflies, hearts, and rhinestones (48 pieces for \$8). Some jewelry even pulls double duty: Kids can blow bubbles with bubble rings (\$6 per dozen) or play dress-up with lip gloss rings (\$10 per dozen). Or you can always buy packs of the ever-popular Silly Bandz from Amazon.com (24 for \$2).

Outrageous Accessories

Horrifying accessories are terrific treats, and boys will also appreciate them. Skull key chains with jeweled eyes (\$4 per dozen) are available from BuyCostumes.com, and Oriental Trading Company has cool pirate eye patches (\$5 per dozen), gruesome glow-in-the-dark Martian fingers (72 for \$7), and even fang whistles (48 for \$8). Girls may prefer tamer options, like fancy Asian folding fans (\$3.50 per dozen), cute animal masks (\$6 per dozen), plastic Halloween clappers (72 for \$18), or glow-in-the-dark light-sticks (50 for \$35).

Bizarre Body Decorations

Temporary tattoos are always a hit with kids. Stick with a Halloween theme and hand out vampire bite (8 for \$3) or *Pirates of the Caribbean* tattoos (8 for \$4), both from BuyCostumes.com. At Oriental Trading Company, there are girly and glittery pirate tattoos (72 for \$5) and Disney Princesses (72 for \$10). Makeup is popular with tween girls, so consider two-tone lip gloss (\$10 per dozen); for boys, there are glow-in-the-dark (72 for \$5) or neon (144 pieces for \$8) vampire fangs, also from Oriental Trading Company.

Awesome Arts & Crafts Materials

Stickers are always fun to collect and trade. At Party City, you can find items like black glitter Halloween stickers, character stickers (*Sesame Street*, *Harry Potter*), and generic sports and animal stickers, all for just a couple of bucks. The Hello Kitty sticker dispenser is a good choice for giving out individual stickers instead of sheets (\$2.29 for the dispenser and six-foot roll of stickers). Oriental Trading Company has Halloween coloring books (\$10 for 72), small boxes of crayons (\$8.50 for 48 six-crayon boxes), and big bug stencils (\$5.25 per dozen). At Amazon.com, you can pick up tiny containers of Play-Doh (24 for \$17) or animal ink stamps (24 for \$7).

Spooky School Supplies

Even though school's in session, kids will love showing off brand-new Halloween-themed supplies. Oriental Trading Company has skull-and-crossbones pencil cases (\$8 per dozen), cute candy corn notepads (24 for \$5), and eyeball pens and notepad sets (\$7 per dozen). Or pick up pencil sharpeners (24 for \$6), pencil top erasers (144 for \$5.25), syringe pens (\$11 per dozen), and rulers (48 for \$5.25) with ghosts, witches, black cats, and other creepy creatures. U.S. School Supply has bat and ghost pencils (144 for \$21.45) and Halloween sets filled with pencils, erasers, and stickers (24 for \$10.45).

Terrifying Pocket Toys and Games

Hand out miniature playthings that will entertain kids in the car or on the playground. "Boo Bunch" mini yo-yos (\$3 per dozen), tiny pinball games (\$6 per dozen), jacks and ball sets (\$5 per dozen), and knockoff Rubik's cubes (\$15 per dozen) are all available at Oriental Trading Company. Inspire outdoor fun with bubble sets (48 for \$6), sidewalk chalk (20 for \$4.50), inflatable mini balls (25 for \$10), and squirting fish toys (\$5.99 per dozen). Find mini Uno games (\$8 for four decks of cards) and safari-themed finger puppets (24 for \$6.45) at Amazon.com.

Hauntingly Healthy Snacks

Cut down on the empty calories and sugar by giving out sensible snacks, like candy's close cousin, sugarless chewing gum. "It's a natural cavity fighter," Chewing stimulates saliva, which fights tooth decay." Mini boxes, bags, and packages of raisins, apple slices, pretzels, string cheese, cereal bars, Goldfish crackers, and Pirate's Booty are easy to find at the local supermarket -- and are well-liked by kids.

