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Limiting the indulgence of trick-or-treating

By Jami Kunzer - jkunzer@shawsurban.com

Need some inspiration not to eat all that Halloween candy this year?

Would you rather your kids not eat it either?

Well, you could sell it to the dentist.

For the second year in a row, Dr. Phillip Neal of Crystal Lake Dental Associates will buy the candy for \$1 a pound.



(Photo provided)

He's going to pack it up and send it to the troops as part of Operation Gratitude, www.opgratitude.com, a nationwide program that encourages people to send care packages to those in the U.S. military.

Last year, Dr. Neal collected about 1,300 pounds of candy, after expecting to collect only about 300 pounds.

"I guess you could say it was a success," he says. "We had a line out the door for about three hours."

Through the event, participants signed a giant card for the troops and visited with members of the Warrior's Watch Riders, a troop support group that provides motorcycle escorts for military units returning from war or deploying.

The program not only benefits the troops, but those families participating as it encourages them to eat less candy, Dr. Neal says.

"We're trying to look at it from an entire health standpoint," he says.

Candy not only damages the teeth, but excessive eating of sugar promotes weight gain and other health problems, he says.

He's not alone in offering advice on how to avoid eating too much candy this year.

The American Dietetic Association recommends that families focus on the fun aspects of Halloween, not the candy.

"(Halloween) is like the kids' dream and the parents' nightmare," says spokeswoman Toby Smithson, a registered dietitian.

Have the kids walk from house to house, she suggests. Don't drive them.

And try to feed them a healthy meal beforehand, Smithson says.

Limit the houses they trick or treat at by taking a break at the park or picking 15 of the best decorated houses to visit, she says.

Once home with the candy, use a "stoplight method," she suggests. Dump the candy out, placing the favorites in the "green" category and so on.

"It's the same concept as not eating the bread basket at dinner," Smithson says. "Put the ones you don't really like away in the red light category."

Moderation is key, says Joanne Trupiano, a registered dietitian with Centegra Health System.

"Let the children have fun, but they don't need to get a whole pillow case full," she says. Let them eat about one or two pieces of candy a day for awhile, and then maybe get rid of the rest, she says.

Also, balance the candy eating with activity. After they've had a few pieces, go for a 20-minute walk, Trupiano suggests. And it really doesn't matter what candy they eat, she says.

"Candy is candy," she says. "Dark chocolate has some benefits, but kids don't really go for the dark chocolate."

As for parents, she suggests they wait until the last minute to buy candy before the holiday to avoid as much temptation as possible.

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Dr. Daniel Strelcheck Jr. walks viewers through a typical introductory visit to Strelcheck Chiropractic Clinic in Crystal Lake.



Mainstay: Healing through horses

A video tour of Mainstay Therapeutic Riding Program in Richmond, which was included in the Healing Through Animals article in the September issue.

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Others suggest handing out low-calorie, low-fat options or even toys. Try sugar-free gum or juice boxes, says Barbara Farner, a former educator on nutrition and wellness for the University of Illinois Extension.

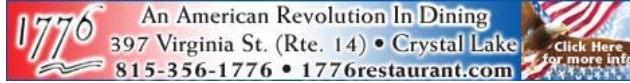
Or go with cheese sticks, small packages of nuts or raisins, cheese and crackers, stickers, crayons, colored chalk, whistles, baseball cards, rubber spiders or worms, she says.

Still, kids are going to get candy. So try to have them eat it with meals, Dr. Neal suggests. And, of course, make sure they brush their teeth afterward.

Candy that dissolves slowly, such as suckers, are the worst for the teeth, he says.

"Just don't sit there and snack on it all day long," he says.

Dr. Phillip Neal of Crystal Lake Dental Associates, 250-B Memorial Court, will buy back Halloween candy from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nov. 1. For more information, call 815- 459-2202.



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