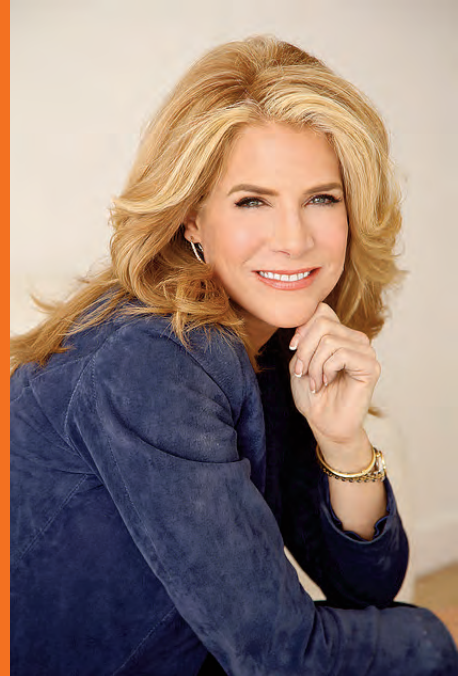


JJ VIRGIN'S

10 Strategies to Crush Halloween Sugar Cravings

Plus
BONUS RECIPES



10 Strategies to Crush Halloween Sugar Cravings

I live in the desert, which doesn't see many amber or ochre falling leaves, nor do we get the crisp gusts of wind that herald the season.

Regardless, every year I welcome the season reading Keats' poem "To Autumn" and feel a shift in consciousness from the long, carefree summer days to a more somber season.

I'm fully aware of autumn's dark side, and no, I don't just mean the shorter days. Walk into any drugstore or supermarket this time of year and you'll find severed finger candies, edible eyeballs, and numerous other sugar bombs masquerading as bloodied, grotesque body parts.

I'm talking, of course, about Halloween, which begins when your receptionist brings in homemade pumpkin-shaped sugar cookies and ends with your kids returning with gargantuan bags of stale candy. Altogether, it spells out: HIGH-SUGAR IMPACT CATASTROPHE!

I can understand kids eating this stuff, but why do we as adults succumb to cellophane bags of high-fructose corn syrup and artificial colors?

Trick-or-treating needn't become civil war with your kids, though neither must you force them to abstain from joy. Instead, let's shift perspective and make Halloween fun rather than just a candy-drenched fiesta.

If you and your family need a jolt this Halloween, skip the candy corn-laced caramel apples and hit the haunted house instead. Follow the 10 strategies listed below to not only survive this Halloween, but to avoid the sugar coma and usher in a happy, healthy Autumn.



10 Strategies to Crush Halloween Sugar Cravings

1. Keep the enemy out of your house. One bite of a chocolate bar triggers memories of childhood chocolate bliss, and next thing you know you're going face down in your kids' secret stash. Even healthy food can become unhealthy when you overdo it, and high-sugar impact foods can quickly become slippery slopes. Don't allow your vice into the house and you won't succumb to 11 p.m. weaknesses. No food traps equal no morning-after regrets.



2. Skip the candy for non-food alternatives. Every house hands out candy, but yours might be the only one to dispense fun toys, stickers, fake tattoos, silly noses, vampire teeth, fake scars, kazoos, streamers, and balloons with funny sayings. Trust me: Kids will welcome these alternatives rather than another bag of candy corn.



3. Go hard. If you just know your kids will stage some kind of coup d'etat without sweets, choose hard candies like lollipops. These require a long time to eat (no engulfing them in one bite!), typically contain fewer calories, and aren't packed with trans fats.

4. Keep my three-bite rule. Your best friend will give you the third degree if you don't sample her skillfully designed graveyard cake. You needn't abstain, but neither should you engulf a gargantuan piece just to be polite. Sample three polite bites and put your fork down. By polite, I mean what you would eat if you were on The Rachael Ray Show, not during an 11 p.m. fridge raid. You can use this same rule with your kids: Three bites and step away from the candy bag. Be aware of gluten, dairy, and other food intolerances and proceed accordingly.

5. Feed your kids. Before you turn them loose to collect their stash, make sure your kids get a balanced dinner with lean protein, plenty of leafy and cruciferous veggies, starchy carbs like legumes or quinoa, and good fat. That way, they're far less likely to devour half the plastic candy-loaded jack o' lantern before they return home. Bonus points if you give them an apple with almond butter as dessert to quench their sweet tooth before they head out.



6. If the enemy arrives, freeze it. Ever engulfed a frozen chocolate-coated caramel-nougat-peanut bar? Not so easy to eat, right? You might break a tooth. If your high-sugar impact downfall does appear on the kitchen table, put it in the freezer. You won't see or smell it, and you'll all but remove the trigger. By the way, that mini candy bar fits perfectly with my three-bite rule. Just stick to one and dump the rest (or at least hide them).

10 Strategies to Crush Halloween Sugar Cravings

7. Inspect the goods. Immediately when they return, inspect your kids' loot and ask them to toss anything they know they won't eat. Then let them choose three small things. Rule: They can have one treat a day. Hide the rest so neither they nor you becomes tempted. If you toss it, chances are they'll forget they even had it.

8. Buy it back. Another strategy to downsize the sugar overload: Offer your kids 25 cents per piece of candy. I'll bet they pick the money over candy.

9. Have a healthy Halloween party. Want to really control what your kids consume? Have a party and serve hot cider with cinnamon-dusted warm almonds. Hot drinks take longer to consume, which slows down your kids' junk consumption.

10. Hand out my Virgin Diet Bars. Crush your cravings and ditch high-sugar impact foods with my Virgin Diet Bars, which make perfect mini-meals for you or treats for the kids. You can now find five fab flavors in my store, including brand new Chocolate Mint. I guarantee they'll quickly become a hit.

Even with this arsenal of tactics, navigating the perilous Halloween-candy extravaganza that now spans the entire month of October can become a real challenge. What strategy do you use so you and your kids don't go on sugar overload? Share yours on my Facebook page.





RECIPES

Pumpkin Almond Chai Shake

All-in-One Shake Chai Recipe Contest Booklet

Contributed by Karen Kidd

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

2 scoops JJ Virgin's All-In-One Chai Shake Powder
1 cup So Delicious Dairy Free unsweetened coconut milk
1/2 cup canned pumpkin puree
1 tablespoon almond butter
1 tablespoon flax seed, ground
1/2 teaspoon chia seeds
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
Dash allspice
Ice

Blend. Add water if too thick



Pumpkin Spice Shake

makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

2 scoops JJ Virgin's All-In-One Vanilla Shake
1 serving JJ Virgin's Extra Fiber
1 tablespoon freshly ground chia seeds
8-10 ounces So Delicious Dairy Free unsweetened coconut milk
1/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
5-6 ice cubes

Combine the protein blend, fiber blend, chia seeds, coconut milk, pumpkin pie spice, and ice cubes. Mix on high until smooth. Thin with additional cold water if desired.

Pumpkin Pie Protein Smoothie

Jeanne Peters, RD

Makes 1 serving*

Ingredients:

½ cup unsweetened coconut milk

½ cup canned pumpkin

1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 serving vanilla protein powder

1 serving fiber blend

¼ cup cold water

about ¾ cup crushed ice cubes or 8-10 ice cubes

Blend all ingredients in a blender – add more liquid, spices or ice to your desired taste and consistency.

*This amount makes a pretty large smoothie - if you feel the need for an extra-large smoothie, this will do the trick.

Baked Pumpkin Chai Oatmeal

Contributed by Tammy Blumenthal

makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

½ cup gluten-free quick oats or old fashioned oats

¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

½ teaspoon cinnamon

1 packet xylitol, stevia or Virgin Sprinkles (to taste)

¼ cup canned pumpkin

¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon unsweetened coconut milk

⅛ tsp. salt

1 scoop The Virgin Diet All-In-One Chai Shake Powder

Optional: Almond butter for spreading

Preheat oven to 380 degrees. Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl. Pour into a greased 1-cup ramekin or a mini-loaf pan. Cook for 20-30 minutes, or until it gets firm. Let cool and then place in refrigerator for several hours to set. Can make it the night before and then it is ready for breakfast in the morning. It can be served warm right out of the oven. It's almost like a very warm - gooey oatmeal cookie or chill to set and then slice and top with almond butter, which is my favorite.

Coconut-Pumpkin Bread

The Sugar Impact Diet

Is there anything better than the nostalgic aroma of pumpkin bread as it comes out of the oven? This version, with a touch of coconut, makes any day a holiday. Be sure to purchase canned pumpkin puree, not pumpkin pie mix, to avoid unwanted sugars.

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients:

1/2 cup coconut oil, melted, plus extra to grease baking pan

4 large eggs

1/2 cup canned pumpkin puree

1/2 cup unsweetened coconut milk

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

1 cup finely ground almond flour

1/2 cup high fiber coconut flour

2 tablespoons monk fruit extract

2 teaspoons grain free baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon sea salt

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease an 8 x 5-inch glass loaf pan with coconut oil.

Whisk together 1/2 cup melted coconut oil, eggs, pumpkin puree, coconut milk, and vanilla extract in a bowl. In a separate bowl, combine the almond flour, coconut flour, monk fruit extract, baking powder, baking soda, pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon, and salt and stir well. Add the wet ingredients to the dry and mix until moistened and well combined. Transfer to the prepared baking pan and smooth the top with a spatula.

Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center of the loaf comes out clean and the outside has lightly browned, 48-50 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool completely, about 1 hour, before slicing.



Peter Pumpkin Eater's Turkey Chili

Contributed to Virgin Diet Holiday Guide by Leanne Ely

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 1/2 pounds lean ground turkey
- 1 medium red onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, pressed
- 1 medium red bell pepper, de-seeded, de-ribbed and chopped
- 1 (16-oz.) can pumpkin puree
- 1 (28-oz.) can diced tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon raw honey
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon



Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.

Add turkey; cook and crumble till no longer pink then transfer to a large slow cooker. Add remaining ingredients and give mixture a good stir*. Cover and cook on HIGH for 2 or 3 hours.

*LEANNE'S NOTE: If you think your chili is too thick, just add a splash of water.

