

# Food cops not popular on Halloween



**CHRISTINE PALUMBO**

Everyone's a kid again on Halloween. The urge to dress up and celebrate is universal. But once you're a parent, the "treat" part of "Trick or Treat" takes on a whole new meaning. What to hand out: Candy? Sugar-free snacks? Or eschew the edibles and turn to toys or stickers?

Now imagine the dilemma of a registered dietitian nutritionist. Should she "walk the talk" and hand out only healthy treats? Or throw caution to the

wind and hand out candy?

In order to learn what the experts plan to do this year, I reached out to four local RDs, all of whom are mothers of young children.

## The treats

When I inquired what they plan to hand out, responses ranged from unsweetened snacks to toys and even candy. "In my experience, the snack size candies help provide limits for my kids," says Jennifer E. Seyler, the founder of Fitness and Nutrition Conversations. "I can say, 'Yes, you can have one piece of candy now and then another later.'"

"Since kids will receive enough of the sugary candy, and also since I don't want my house egged, I tend to go 'middle of the road' with the items I pass out for trick or treating," says Kelly Devine Rickert, president of Devine Nutrition Inc. "I will do raisins, pretzels, animal crackers or even Annie's Home Grown snacks."

How important is it to hand out healthy Halloween treats? "As parents, I believe that our role is to model and encourage behaviors that we want our children to learn," says Paula Milas

Sochacki, a private practice consultant. "We should provide our kids with healthy treats, not provide them with junk food items that will continue to emphasize that rewards should be associated with having fun."

## BK and AK (before kids, after kids)

Did their points of view change after they became mothers? "My views have not changed," says Caroline Margolis, a consultant in food and nutrition communications. "However, I do not let my kids eat a ton of candy on Halloween night. I still abide by the treat part. I give them one or two a day from their basket that night and for the next week or two."

Like you, nutritionist moms have tough choices to make as the big day approaches. But after about a week, your kids will forget about their loot and start thinking about their list for Santa.

Christine Palumbo, RDN, FAND, is a nutritionist in Naperville where she plans to hand out holiday themed pencils, chocolate-covered raisins and snack size Almond Joy bars (in case there are extras). Find her at Christine Palumbo Nutrition on Facebook, @PalumboRD on Twitter and Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

## Slow Cooker Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Bread

Serves 15

### Ingredients

½ cup olive oil (or ½ cup melted butter)  
 ⅔ cup maple syrup (or 1 cup sugar)  
 2 eggs  
 1 Tbsp. 2% milk  
 1 tsp. vanilla  
 ⅔ can of organic canned pumpkin  
 1 cup plus 1 Tbsp. whole wheat flour  
 1 cup all-purpose flour  
 1 tsp. baking soda  
 ½ tsp. salt  
 ¾ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips  
 1 Tbsp. Sweet & Spicy Blend (optional)\*



### Directions

1. Spray a 2-pound loaf pan with non-stick oil and shake 1 Tbsp. flour to coat the edges.
2. Place a small piece of foil on the bottom of your slow cooker.
3. Turn your slow cooker on high.
4. In a large bowl, mix the flours, baking soda and salt.
5. Add the olive oil, maple syrup, eggs, milk and vanilla, making sure that the ingredients are thoroughly beaten and the mixture is without lumps. (If using butter and sugar, blend the ingredients together in a separate bowl before mixing the eggs, milk and vanilla.)
6. Fold in pumpkin and chocolate chips.
7. Pour the entire mixture into your loaf pan and set in your slow cooker to 2 hours on high.

\* Available from [thezenofslowcooking.com](http://thezenofslowcooking.com)

Used with permission from Meg Barnhart and Jane McKay, *The Zen of Slow Cooking* blog

Nutrition facts per serving: 220 calories, 29 g carbohydrate (15 g sugars, 2 g fiber), 3 g protein, 11 g fat (3 g saturated), 25 mg cholesterol, 170 mg sodium, 60% DV vitamin A, 8% DV iron.

