

POSSIBILITIES FOR AUTISM

Feel Better + Live Better

OCTOBER 13, 2015 BY BETH SECOSKY

The 3 Best Autism-Friendly Treats You Can Give Your Child on Halloween

Is your child on a special autism diet, e.g. GF/CF, SCD, GAPS, Paleo? If so, you're probably starting to think about what kind of treats you'll have for Halloween. Perhaps, you're also concerned that the season of candy might bring on a regression. I will share some of the lessons I've learned from Halloween and some specific treats you might want to consider to prevent a gluten/sugar-induced setback.

Several years ago my friend, Laura, and her family who were already on SCD (the Specific Carbohydrate Diet) went trick-or-treating with us. At the time we were in denial about our 4 year-old being on the autism spectrum, and we had no idea that the "crazy" diet that our friends were on could transform our son's quality of life and the rest of the family's too.



I knew our friends were off of sugar, but I assumed that they would make an exception for their 6 year-old neuro-typical son on Halloween. (Imagine having the moxie to put your family on an uber-healthy diet like SCD when there is no autism, no Crohn's, and no other serious health issues. I am blessed to have had them as role models. But, I digress from my Halloween tale.)

The kids had a blast trick-or-treating. Then, we came back to the house, and they dumped their stash on the floor. What came next blew my mind. Our friend's son took 1 piece of candy and packed up the rest and gave it to his dad! They explained that their son was getting a new toy when they got home.

I couldn't believe it!

- How could they deprive their son of his childhood right to gorge himself with candy? (OK, I knew candy isn't healthy, but I thought an occasional gorge was no problem.)
- How could they put their son in a situation where other children are experiencing such joy that he couldn't partake in?
- How did they get him to be content with 1 piece of candy as he sat in front of a huge stash?

Fast forward almost 2 years to September. My son's behavior has become so

severe (including 3-hour violent tantrums) that we can no longer deny his autism. That September, we adopted SCD, the same diet my friends were on.

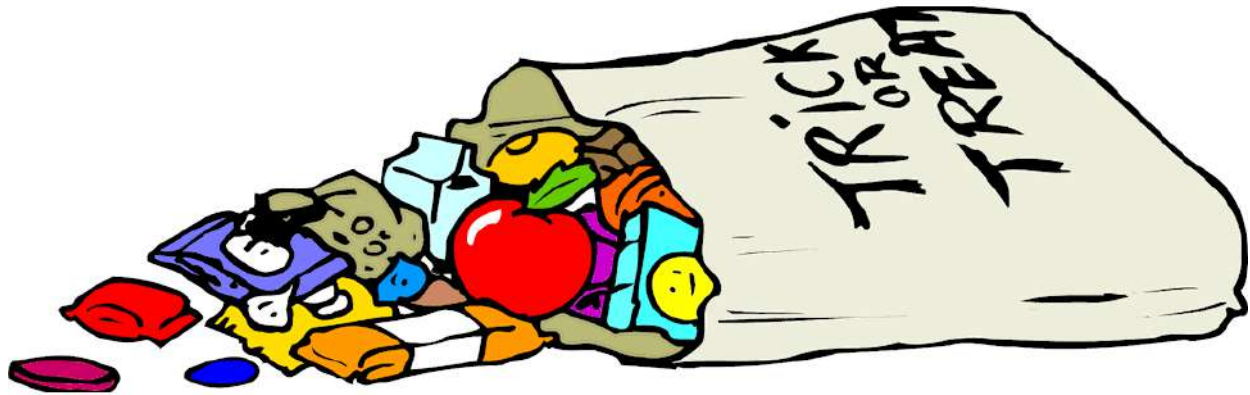
By the time Halloween came around 2 months later, my son had dropped 22 ATEC points and the violent tantrums were gone. My daughter's severe anxiety was completely gone. Our quality of life was immeasurably better. All of a sudden, I totally understood Laura's approach to Halloween.

My son felt so much better, and the entire family was so much happier that I was not willing to give my kids even 1 bite of sugar. I wouldn't risk our newfound happiness just so my kids could have a "party in their mouth" and "fit in" with the other kids. It simply wasn't worth it.

So, I had to get the kids on board. It wasn't as hard as I expected because I had already taught them about the impact of sweet and starchy foods on our gut flora. I had also made sure that they were clear that the disappearance of my son's severe stomach aches and my daughter's anxiety were directly related to our new way of eating. They understood that sweet and starchy foods feed the bad bacteria and make them feel bad.

Their knowledge helped, but they were still kids. They wanted to have what everyone else was having. I had to sweeten the deal without using sweets! So, I took a play from my friend Laura's playbook and let them pick out a really exciting toy. The deal had 3 parts. First, I found some recipes for SCD-legal candy. Second, I let them each pick out a really exciting toy. Third, they would give their candy to daddy so he could put it out in the break room at work.

On Halloween, I held my breath. Was the plan going to work?



The kids snacked on their SCD legal treats while trick-or-treating. Check. Then came the moment of truth. Would they turn over their stash for their new toy? ... YES! They did it. They were so excited about the new toy that sat waiting for them when they returned, they ran to their toy and left the candy behind.

I share this story with you to encourage you that you can prevent gluten/sugar-induced regressions by staying true to whatever autism diet you are using – even during Halloween and other holidays. And, in fact, you can turn Halloween and other sugar-filled holidays into a time for learning profound life lessons.

How to turn Halloween into a teachable moment AND Specific sugar-free treats to offer

Whatever dietary restrictions you stick to this Halloween, you are also teaching your children 3 profound lessons (treats) that will last them a lifetime:

- The knowledge of true nutrition that will keep them healthier and happier for the rest of their life
- The idea that they can set and achieve audacious goals (In this case recovery from autism and anxiety) but it will take sacrifices
- The confidence that they can do what's **best for them** even when everyone else is making different choices



I didn't see the brilliant lessons my friend Laura was teaching her son. Your neighbors, friends, and family may not "get" what a brilliant thing you are doing either. That's ok. What's important is that you "get" it. You see that the profound lifelong lessons of Halloween are true wisdom that we autism parents have the privilege to pass on to our children. Without autism, most of us wouldn't know what we know and be able to pass this wisdom on to our children and ultimately future generations.

OK – Enough of the mushy stuff. I promised you I would share the **3 best treats for**

Halloween this year. Here's what I recommend:

- #1: A toy in lieu of candy.



- #2: Fruit bars or fruit candy made without sugar



- #3: Honey-sweetened candy that is in compliance with your child's diet.
 - Honey Delights — Pure Honey Candy (The lemon is yummy!)
 - <http://www.wellbees.com/pure-honey-candy-3806.html>



I would never wish that autism had impacted my son and our family. However, the lessons we are learning and the fortitude and strength we are building are truly a blessing. May your family receive the same blessings.

📌 **AUTISM, ADHD, LEARNING DISABILITIES, AND MORE, FOOD**

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