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**Holiday Tips & Treats That Won't Play Tricks On Your Waistline**

**By Dianne Villano**

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Halloween - so starts the Holiday Season. The average American gains 7–12 pounds between Halloween and New Year's . The next series of articles will help you ensure that you won't be among them. First, Halloween. As Halloween rears it's head, so does the plethora of wonderful smelling chocolates and other treats that tempt us as we walk through the aisles of our favorite stores. I will cover some tips, tricks and nutrition information for many of the popular candies to help you make the best choices . The moral is – if you can count it and limit it to a single serving , you can work it into your food plan and enjoy the Holiday festivities without sacrificing your fitness goals.

1. Keep your goals firmly planted in your mind. We all get "caught up" from time to time. While in "the moment", it is quite easy to lose sight of your ultimate vision and why you began your fitness or nutrition program in the first place. I always spend time, prior to the beginning of the Holiday season, reinforcing our client's "Why's". How will your life be better when you are living at your goal weight? What will you be wearing? How will you be feeling? Where will you feel more confident or energetic? How will your weight loss benefit your family ? How are you feeling in your current condition? Why the heck do you want to lose this weight anyway ? I suggest that people make a "why card" and keep it visible for those times when the going gets tough. You can also pick out a favorite outfit which no longer fits , find a picture of an outfit that you would love to be able to wear, find a picture of yourself or someone else that represents your goal or find a "before" picture that represents something that you never want to go back to. Keep them handy for a constant reminder of why you do want to make the choices that will lead you to your goal .

2. Keep an eye on serving sizes and portions - Any food (even not so healthy ones) can be worked into your food plan, it's just a matter of awareness and balance. Many people label foods "good" or bad. In reality, it is all about portions and serving sizes.

3. Make a plan – If you are like most people, you grab a "treat" or two every time you walk past the bowl. This can add up to hundreds of calories before you know it. Plan ahead and count a few treats

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into your food plan ahead of time. Count them out in advance and place them in a separate bowl or dish. This will keep you from feeling "deprived" and still allow you to stay on track towards your goals.

4. Avoid the "All or nothing" mentality. Let's face it, no one's perfect. Chances are, there will be a time or two when you go overboard. Don't let this lead into an "I already blew it" binge that lasts until January 1st. No one or two days is going to make or break your fat loss efforts. The key is to get right back on track the next day and consider adding some extra cardio in to work off the extra calories.

5. What is in YOUR candy bowl ? This can make a significant difference in how you manage your weight throughout the Holiday. Be aware, however, that "healthier" does not necessarily mean "fewer calories" , that "low fat" does not mean that you can eat twice as much, and that "lo carb" usually means more calories.

6. Choose candy you don't like: You will be less apt to eat out of habit and "take a piece or two" if you are not surrounded by your favorites

7. Choose alternatives to candy: Give out dried fruits, nuts, raisins, cheese and cracker packets, pretzels, popcorn , or fruit roll-ups for a more healthful "treats"

8. Choose low-calorie treats: Things like Licorice, popcorn, gummy bears, mints and marshmallows are all lower calorie alternatives

9. Choose small portions: Buy fun-sized chocolates instead of their full sized counterparts. Don't forget to count out in advance your allotted servings for the day.

10. Choose non-food alternatives: You can still enjoy the holiday festivities and keep the trick or treaters happy. Many stores and holiday shops carry a multitude of Halloween miniature toys, cars, glow-in-the-dark necklaces and other fun little goodies.

11. Be informed and prepared: Many people see the holidays as a time where nutrition labels don't matter because all "treats" are bad. During this time of year it is even more important to look at and compare nutrition labels and to be aware of SERVING SIZES. This will allow you to enjoy the holidays without sabotaging your weight loss efforts. Here is some nutrition information for you to consider.

Nutrition information may vary from company to company and may vary from this list, please check your individual food labels. FOOD SERVING SIZE CAL CARBS FAT Fun Sized

StarBurst 1 pkg 40 8 1 Marshmallows ½ c 45 12 0 Fruit

rollups 1 roll 50 12 0 Junior Mints 1 sml box 55 12 1 Raisins

2 tsp 60 14 0 Fun Sized 3 Musketeers 1 bar 70 12 2.5 Fun Sized Milky

Way 1 bar 90 14 3.5 Hershey's Kisses 4 100 12 6 Fun Sized Butter

Finger 1 bar 100 15 4 Fun Sized Kit Kat 1 bar 100 12 5 Pretzels

22 pieces 110 22 2 Dried Apricots ¼ c 130 30 0 Fun Sized baby Ruth

1 bar 130 17 7 Goldfish 55 pieces 150 25 5 Nuts ¼ c

160 6 15 Cheese & Crackers 1 Pkg 220 44 5 M & M's 1 sml bag

220 50 5

Article written by Dianne Villano, President of Custom Bodies Personal Training and Weight Loss Programs. Dianne is a personal fitness instructor certified through the National Academy of Sports Medicine with over 16 years of experience who specializes in weight loss programs and programs for beginners. For more articles or free fitness tools visit

## **Reclaiming Your Inner Child**

**By Ida Byrd–Hill**

Remember when you were a child. Everyday seemed to be an adventure filled with laughter and giggles. There was humor all around us. Children laugh 400 times a day up to 4 years old, while adults laugh 15 times a day. Unfortunately, the cares of life weigh most of us down. We turn to alcohol, sex and drugs to relive that silly time of our lives. We can reclaim our inner child without the pain of sex, drugs and alcohol.

How does one reclaim their inner child??? First by realizing it is ok to step outside of our sophisticated selves and play. Given our career image, we must uphold it is hard to just play. We develop sophisticated hobbies such as golf, sailing tennis and horseback riding, but do we just wrestle and play? Playtime and laughter keeps us young and joyful. We need play to escape stress, heart attacks and strokes.

Our lack of play explains why Halloween has become the second largest holiday after Christmas. It is one of the few days where it is socially acceptable to dress up in a costume and become whom ever we choose. We can be Spiderman, a gangster, a witch, a bar maid or a goblin all day without strange looks. We can role play and laugh at others who role play with joy and glee. For one day, we can gallivant throughout the neighborhood with the children and grandchildren collecting treats or delivering tricks. We can party and dance all night in our new role. We can play make believe again. It is our day to be a child again.

Let your playtime begin this Halloween. But don't stop there. Reclaim your inner child at least once a month all throughout the year. The quality of your life and your health will truly improve as your laughter and play grows.

Ida B. Byrd–Hill is the President of Uplift Financial and

. She was the

President of The Harvard Group Wealth Management L.L.C. for 10 years. She created investment portfolios, insurance plans and residential/ commercial financing. She has served as guest columnist for the Michigan Front Page for 2 years and a speaker for the Better Investing television show hosted by David Chilton, author of The Wealthy Barber.

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