

The real scare from Halloween
by Mike DeCinti

Let me start this article with something I wish more meteorologists would do on a regular basis...apologize for the extremely incorrect weather prediction I made in my last article. If you remember I wrote about how to dress correctly for exercising in the cold after I spent a weekend unprepared for morning temperatures in the high 40's low 50's. Well who knew the weeks that would follow would be hot and muggy with morning temperatures in the 70's? So although the article was filled with useful information, I think it may have been a bit premature. So just hang onto it, you'll need it soon enough.

So today is Halloween and for those of you who do a good job exercising and watching what you eat throughout the rest of the year, this holiday seems to have fallen into the category of days you ignore your wellness program. You know like Christmas, New Years, Thanksgiving and Easter. Of course for others that list also includes the 4th of July, Memorial Day and St. Patrick's Day. Still others include Groundhogs Day, Labor Day... Saturday.

Last week Kathy Hansen gave everyone great ideas on how to get in some exercise and family time while trick or treating. So hopefully you'll follow Kathy's plan and enjoy some quality time together as you search the neighborhoods for ghosts, goblins and goodies.

However, if the thing that scares you the most is your trip to the bathroom scale Thursday morning, I'd like to give you some information that can help you get right back on track.

One night of indulgence in Halloween candy might not be enough to completely derail your ongoing wellness program but dipping into the leftover stockpile of treats for weeks will surely disrupt your weight loss program. Not to mention the fact that this time of year is considered the "Holiday Season" and there is bound to be many more temptations coming your way over the next two months.

So enjoy a few small pieces of candy, but avoid the temptation of having "just one more" because that's what will pack on the pounds. It only takes nine small fun-size candy bars to put on a quarter-pound of fat. Besides candy, Halloween brings out many other high-calorie treats like Caramel apples (243 calories), 8-oz. apple cider and a piece of cake (319 calories), or a slice of pumpkin pie (240 calories).

First, and most importantly, don't beat yourself up for having one bad night. Even if you find yourself stealing your children's candy in the middle of the night don't consider that the end of your wellness program. Too often people think one bad night, one bad meal, or even one bad weekend is the beginning of the end to a healthier lifestyle. It's not. It's just one small event you need to put behind you and get right back to healthy eating and regular exercise.

However if the candy does make it through the night remember ‘out of sight, out of mind.’ When the kids have unloaded their stash, store it in an airtight container and put it in the cupboard. A bowl full of candy on the counter is an open invitation to eat, but a stockpile you can’t see is less tempting.

Set a Halloween candy deadline by which all Halloween candy must be either consumed (by the kids) or it will be thrown away. Saving that candy for weeks, or even months, only keeps temptation in the house. But let’s not use this as an excuse to stuff your children with a bucket of candy on the last day of the deadline. You don’t want to send the wrong message to them about the amount of candy they should have.

Of course, the absolute best way to avoid weight gain, and perhaps even achieve some easy weight loss, during the Halloween and upcoming Holiday Season is to bump up the amount of exercise you’re getting right now. At a minimum you should be exercising at least 3 days a week for at least 30 minutes at a time. But with the holidays coming, along with more stress and more food more often, try exercising at least 1 to 2 more days a week while adding another 10 to 15 minutes to each workout.

Finally, I’d like to mention an event that can help you work off those extra Halloween pounds while helping a good cause. On Saturday, November 3rd Lumberton Radiological Associates is holding their 2nd Annual LRA Field Charity Golf Tournament to benefit the UNCP Softball Program. You can either register a 4-person team or become a sponsor and all proceeds will go to the Lady Braves. For more information please feel free to call me or UNCP Softball Head Coach Steve Johnson at 521-6308.

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