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Halloween Candy: Is some better for you than others?



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Jean Jadhon
WDBJ-TV Anchor/Reporter
4:31 p.m. EDT, October 28, 2011

It's Halloween and that means candy, but not all candy is created equal. In tonight's Hometown Health, is some candy actually better for you than others?

As you're browsing the candy aisles this Halloween you may notice that some candy packaging has words on the front that tout either "less fat" or "fruit and antioxidants." While candy certainly isn't health food, there is some candy that is better for you than other candy.

Chocolate covered raisins under the brand name Raisinets are one of the better candies out there for you.

"There are lesser of evils so to speak and Raisinets would fall along that scale of an improvement over say versus a Sweet tart or Three Musketeer's," said Ally Bowersock, Director of Health and Exercise Science Program at Jefferson College of Health Sciences.

That's because Raisinets do come from what was a whole food at one point, according to Bowersock. "They come from grapes." Other candies such as candy corn and Sweet Tarts are mostly sugar. "Those are definitely the ones that are worse for you," Bowersock said.

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For all of you chocolate lovers, there is some good news for you. Dark chocolate is better for you than milk chocolate or white chocolate. "Chocolate in general as a candy is better than a Sweet Tart or candy corn because chocolate contains flavanoids which is a natural substance that you find in other foods," Bowersock said. "So if you want to have a less guilty treat the dark chocolate is a great choice."

Dum Dum lollipops are low in calories because they are so small and Smarties are also fairly low in calories because the portion in one package is small, Bowersock said.

Bowersock said it's important to keep all portions of candy small, because the calories are high. She also recommended trail mix or fruit cut up in small pieces as a healthier alternative than candy.

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pandab at 6:24 AM October 29, 2011

"She [Bowersock] also recommended trail mix or fruit cut up in small pieces as a healthier alternative than candy.

Which is peachy, if you are giving trail mix or fruit to your own kids or unless it is prepackaged. Most parents won't allow their kids to eat homemade treats from strangers. That's sad, but I understand why. I don't have kids, but if I did, I certainly wouldn't let them eat something like that either.

I'm sure 99.99% of homemade treats are perfectly safe. It's that teeny-tiny percent that would worry me, and not only because of crazies in the world. I wouldn't know who prepared the treat or how. Even a nice, well-meaning person can cause illness (and yes, death) if they didn't follow careful hygiene standards.

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