



Halloween Tips from a safe, savvy allergy-aware mom:

Halloween can be a tricky time for kids with food sensitivities. Having three kids with Celiac Disease, in addition to multiple food allergies, and moving across the country created enough of a challenge for us four years ago. Adding Halloween to that mix almost put me over the top! But I used my tried and true tricks-for-treats that have worked great in every place we've lived.

Trick-or-treating

I prepared for trick-or-treating by planning ahead and informing my neighbors. I made 10 Ziploc bags of candies for each of my kids and delivered them to my neighbors with a note asking them to give these to our children on Halloween night. That way, I knew for sure the kids would get some candy they could eat. Afterward, the children of some of those parents were also willing to do a "candy trade". They traded candy that was safe for the unsafe candy my kids picked up at other houses and could eat. It worked out great and everyone was happy! I was amazed how willing people were to help out the next year and actually asked what kind of candy was safe for my children. What a treat!

Instead of giving candy, we ordered the ever-cool rubber bracelets to hand out for trick-or-treaters. Buying in volume is about the same cost as candy! The neighborhood children loved the novelty and soon others handed out some non-candy items.

School celebrations

Halloween is cause for many celebrations in the school, so I thought it best to involve the teachers. I asked them to help alert the parents that our child has "food allergies" and supplied a list of safe candy/treats. I also send a bag or two of Candy Corn by Jelly Belly for the class party or class work leading up to Halloween. It is a popular treat and can be used to play Halloween Bingo.

The University of Chicago has a terrific list of safe ingredients that I bring to each of my children's homerooms at the beginning of the year with a bin of "safe snacks". The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network is also a great resource for all food allergies and one to share with teachers, friends and family.

Friend's houses

We made it easy for families to invite us by bringing our own "safe foods" and even providing a list of our favorite safe items, and where to buy them. It was easy for them to pick up our favorites and have these items on hand for when we came over again. We always share our safe treats too. Other kids are always interested and it seems to be the fastest way for mom to buy our favorite treats- because their kids wanted it too! I also share me email address or cell phone number in case there are any questions.

My safe candy resources:

Willy Wonka has a great, reliable line of gluten-free and dairy-free candies. Nerds and Laffy Taffy are a couple of them.

Enjoy Life has a yummy NEW chocolate bar, boom CHOCO boom. The crispy rice one is our favorite! The cookie snack pack (2 cookies/pack) and snack bars are also great for Halloween.

The Celiac Listserv – sign up for daily alerts/emails at celiac@listserv.icors.org

About.com: gluten-free candy – you can also share this link with neighbors and friends.

Fun, edible Halloween projects:

Chocolate-covered marshmallows:

One bag of Kraft* marshmallows

6 Enjoy Life boom CHOCO boom chocolate Bars or 1 (10 oz) bag Enjoy Life semi-sweet chocolate chips

Popsicle sticks

Directions:

- 1.) Put 2 marshmallows on each stick
- 2.) Melt the chocolate in a medium saucepan over low heat.
- 3.) Dip the marshmallows into the melted chocolate
- 4.) Set them aside on a wax paper to set
- 5.) Shake Betty Crocker* orange and black sprinkles on them. Simply changing the sprinkles can make this yummy craft work for each holiday.

"Puppy chow" - perfect for parties or festive hay rides!

1 (10 oz) bag Enjoy Life semi-sweet chocolate chips

¼ cup of Earth Balance margarine (contains soy)

½ cup of Sunbutter

9 cups of gluten-free Rice Chex* or Perky's Original O's

1 ½ cups powdered sugar

Directions:

- 1.) Pour cereal into a large bowl and set aside.
- 2.) Melt chocolate and margarine, in a sauce pan over low heat. You can also use a microwave using a microwave-safe bowl.
- 3.) Stir in Sunbutter until melted and smooth.
- 4.) Pour melted chocolate mixture over cereal until it is coated evenly. Then pour into large paper bag
- 5.) Add powdered sugar, close bag and shake well until coated.
- 6.) Store in refrigerator until the big even. Then share with friends and family so everyone can see how good a safe treat can be!

Chocolate covered apples.

A quick, delectable holiday treat! Insert a popsicle stick into an apple. Melt one Enjoy Life boom CHOCO boom bar per apple (you could also use Enjoy Life's semi-sweet chocolate chips). Dip apple into melted chocolate. Let excess chocolate drain off before setting aside on wax paper. Add some color with Betty Crocker* sprinkles. Let set, then enjoy!

**Always confirm with Manufacturer for allergen information*

Tips provided by Jane Roberts, a fellow allergy-aware mom, and Enjoy Life (www.enjoylifefoods.com)