Boo! Halloween Sugar Can Be Scary

This time of year there is no need to go door-to-door to get a Halloween candy fix. From overstuffed grocery store shelves to breakroom treats left by well-meaning coworkers, we are surrounded by sugar.

Kaela Ketcham is a registered dietitian at OSF HealthCare. She says eating sugar can lead to a rise in glucose in the blood, which has been associated with an increase in triglycerides, a type of fat found in blood, and a decrease in high-density-lipoproteins, or H-D-L cholesterol. This can lead to higher risk of heart disease.

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Kaela Ketcham, OSF HealthCare Registered Dietitian
"What's recommended by the American Heart Association is that women stick to 100 calories or less, which is about 25 grams of sugar, or six teaspoons. And for men it's about 150 calories. And so when we exceed that amount per day, then it can lead to extra calories, which can put us at risk for obesity, diabetes or even heart disease." (:23)

However, a sugary treat every now and then isn't cause for alarm, but for some stopping at a reasonable amount is a trick, when faced with so many treats. But is sugar actually addictive? Ketcham says the jury is still out on that.

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"Research is actually looking into this, and they are trying to determine if its addiction is similar to that of like a drug addiction. It's still being studied, but either way we do know that when we eat sugar it gives us that pleasure feeling and then we want to come back for more." (:15)

If you are worried about willpower during the Halloween season, Ketcham has some tips to keep sugar from being a scary part of your holiday fun.

She says don't buy your candy too far in advance - It will tempt you for a longer period of time. Buy candy you don't enjoy, and you won't be tempted to eat it. Buy less candy than you think you need to avoid the possibility of leftovers, or even brush your teeth right before handing out candy. A minty mouth can lessen the desire to eat candy.