

Letter To The Editor: It Can Be Healthy To Eat Candy

by Abigail Parker

October 31 2023 1:18 PM



My opinion on candy has changed a lot over the years. You see, prior to teaching others about nutrition, I didn't care one bit about what I ate. Having candy and sweets was a regular day in the life. When it comes to candy, you're either a chocolate or fruity person – it's chocolate for me. Snickers has been my favorite for as long as I can remember. There's something about the salty/sweet combo of peanuts and chocolate in there.

I had no control over my sweet tooth. There was candy available on a regular basis at my prior job – especially after Halloween. It was a time of year to get excited about, like an early Christmas gift when co-workers would bring in their leftover candy that didn't go out to trick-or-treaters. They didn't want to leave it in their house because they would eat it. However, I was happy to help them with that.

As you may be able to guess, though, my opinion on candy changed as I started to dive into nutrition. In fact, I went completely opposite. I believed in good and bad foods. I needed to eat only the foods that were good for me, like fruits and vegetables. Healthy foods. Candy was definitely a bad food. There was no need to eat it from a nutrition standpoint, so I told myself I couldn't have it anymore.

The word “no” is powerful. I associate it now with a child learning no and thinking it's a game. When you tell a child no, that they can't do something, they tend to press their luck to see if they certainly can. Being told no makes them want it more; they don't like that word.

Neither do we as adults.

I struggled for over a year with the game. I would tell myself no, you can't eat candy because it's bad for you. Then I'd be secretly buying my favorite candy bar while grocery shopping and hiding the wrapper when I got home. I felt guilty for not being able to control the cravings that I thought were just in my mind.

I've turned my life around again, but this time for the best. I no longer crave sugar and am able to enjoy it when I want it. Remember that powerful word? I can even say no now and mean it.

Cravings are a sign that you're not eating for your needs. They don't mean you lack willpower, like I thought for so long. You can make simple changes to the way you eat that make the cravings seem to disappear.

I finally learned the truth about what it means to eat healthy, and my definition includes eating Halloween candy. When you try to cut out things you enjoy, you're likely to have a hard time sticking with it. That leads to lack of control, like losing count of how many bite-sized pieces of candy you ate before dinner. There is no such thing as perfection when it comes to eating. Trying to live up to a made-up expectation only sets you up for failure. In my case, it was a lot of food guilt.

So this Halloween, I invite you to let yourself eat the candy.

Abigail Parker

Opinions expressed in this section are solely those of the individual authors and do not represent the views of RiverBender.com or its affiliates. We provide a platform for community voices, but the responsibility for opinions rests with their authors.