

# There's no Halloween without candy

I shut off my lights. Not just the outside house lights, but also the kitchen light, the dining room light, the living room light and the hall lights. The sun has begun its early descent as November looms in the morning.

I pack a small cache of food. An apple and a steak sandwich. A glass of water. A thermos of coffee. I look around the kitchen for what else I might need. Salsa and chips might be good too.

"Come on," I coax the dog, who looks at me like something is awry. "Let's go to the basement."

Sounds like a tornado in the Midwest, right? Food, drink and a remote with fresh batteries. Alas, it's just Halloween.

Forgive me children of Prairie View, or wherever I am now. Forgive me that when I went to Target to buy your candy, I came back empty handed. Forgive me that the mini Snickers and Milky Ways, the Hot Tamales and Dum Dums stayed on the quickly emptying shelves at the store. Forgive the crazy country that says apples are dangerous. Forgive me that the gluten free and organic lollipops at the other store I shop at were too expensive. Forgive me. Forgive me for skipping Halloween.

In past years, I have bought my Halloween candy weeks in advance. In fact, it's been the one holiday that I'm usually prepared for. As soon as the stores stock the big bags of candy, I'm all over it. I estimate the number of kids I might have and double it. I double it because I eat about half the candy before Halloween, and I don't want to shop twice. You might suggest to me a trick about my treats - buying only candy that I don't like, like Reese's or Mounds. You might think that would keep me from eating the candy. It might, if I were a normal person when it comes to candy, but I'm not and it doesn't work. Long ago I discovered that it's possible to eat just the chocolate off a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup. I know. I've done it (though it's easier when



they're frozen).

The doorbell rings. "Come on," I insist again to the dog. They'll see us. We dash down to the basement. I feel guilty. I feel like I'm doing something illicit. How many hours do I have to stay down there to be in the clear? Three? Not a problem.

I know I will miss the Spidermans, the princesses, the Screams and the Lady Gagas. I know I will miss dropping the candy into the plastic pumpkins and pillowcases. I know I will miss teasing the older kids about how the lack of a costume doesn't quite cut it.

I will miss it, or not.

It's dusk on Halloween. There's no pumpkin on my stoop. The cobwebs that are around my door are there because of spiders. The lights are off. And I'm in the dark, in the chilly basement, with my food, my coffee, my dog and a slightly guilty feeling. I turn on the television. Sure would be nice to have some candy ...



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rustlings

**Jody Russell is an Eden Prairie Web designer, photographer and writer. Her columns appear regularly in the *Eden Prairie News*.**