

# Halloween Safety

There is no trick to making Halloween a treat for the entire family.

Most people think of Halloween as a time for fun and treats; however, roughly four times as many children (ages of 5-14) are killed while walking on Halloween evening than on any other evening of the year. Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries on Halloween.

Many Halloween-related injuries can be prevented by closely supervising school-aged children during trick-or-treat activities. Following simple safety tips will help keep Halloween activities safe and fun.

## Planning Stage

- Make sure that an adult or an older responsible youth will be supervising the outing for children under age 12.
- Plan and discuss the route trick-or-treaters intend to follow. Know the names of older children's companions.
- Instruct children to stop only at houses or apartment buildings that are well-lit and **never** to enter a stranger's home.
- Establish a curfew (a return time) for older children.

## All Dressed Up

- Costumes should be flame-retardant and fit properly. Avoid oversized shoes, high heels and long skirts or pants that could cause a child to fall.

Reminder: falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries on Halloween.

- Costumes should be loose so warm clothes can be worn underneath.
- Because they can obstruct a child's vision, masks are not recommended. If a child wears makeup, purchase non-toxic, hypoallergenic products. If masks are worn, they should have nose and mouth openings and large eye holes.
- Knives, swords and other costume accessories should be made from cardboard or flexible materials. Do not allow children to carry sharp objects.
- Pin a slip of paper with the child's name, address and phone number inside a pocket in case the youngster gets separated from the group.
- Children who will be trick-or-treating after dusk should have reflective tape on their costumes and carry flashlights. Bags or sacks carried by youngsters should be light-colored or trimmed with reflective tape.

## On the way

- Instruct children to stop only at houses or apartment buildings that are well-lit and never enter a stranger's home.
- Ensure children know their phone number and carry coins for emergency telephone calls.
- Walk, do not run, from house to house. Do not cross yards and lawns where unseen objects or the uneven terrain can present tripping hazards.

- Walk on sidewalks, not in the street.
- if there are no sidewalks, walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic.

### **Sweet Treats**

- Give children an early meal before going out.
- Children shouldn't snack while they're trick-or-treating. Insist that treats be brought home for inspection before anything is eaten.
- Watch for signs of tampering, such as small pinholes in wrappers and torn or loose packages. When in doubt, throw it out.
- Parents of young children should get rid of choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies or small toys.

### **Carving a Niche**

- Carve pumpkins on stable, flat surfaces with good lighting.
- Small children should never carve pumpkins. Children can draw a face with markers, then parents can do the cutting. Under parents' supervision, children ages 5 to 10 can carve with pumpkin cutters equipped with safety bars.
- Votive candles are safest for candlelit pumpkins.
- Lighted pumpkins should be placed on a sturdy table, away from curtains and other flammable objects and should never be left unattended.

### **Drive Carefully:**

- Watch for children darting out from between parked cars
- Watch for children walking on roadways, medians and curbs.
- Enter and exit driveways and alleys carefully.
- At twilight and later in the evening, watch for children in dark clothing.

### **Home Safe Home**

- Keep your home safe for visiting trick-or-treaters: remove anything a child could trip over such as garden hoses, toys, bikes and lawn decorations.
- Check outdoor lights and replace burned-out bulbs.
- Wet leaves should be swept from sidewalks and steps.
- Remember that Halloween is for children of all ages . . . so get involved with your little ghost or goblin!

For more information on Injury Prevention topics contact John W. Leith-Sanitarian-Indian Health Service at 605-698-7606 ext. 3071. Please leave voice mail message if not in the office.

**Have a safe and happy  
Halloween!**