

Treats Can Be Tricky – Halloween Safety

Halloween is a long-standing tradition across the United States—so chances are high that you will be taking kids out trick or treating this year. Here are some Halloween safety tips that will help you and your family stay safe while enjoying this fun holiday.

Follow certain precautions when you are making or purchasing costumes. Here are a few:

- Choose flame-resistant or flame-retardant costumes.
- Make sure costumes have reflective strips—or apply them before using the costume.
- Get or make a costume that fits well, i.e., one that is not too long or billowing that might cause trips or falls.
- Check that kids can see through masks. It may be safer to paint their faces or use makeup instead.
- Make sure they wear sturdy shoes for walking.
- Make sure they wear warm clothes under the costume if the weather is cold.

Use the same precautions for walking around the neighborhood at night that you follow even when it is not Halloween. That includes:

- Carrying a flashlight with a strong beam and good batteries.
- Making sure young kids are accompanied by adults or responsible older children.
- Making sure older kids travel in groups.
- Following the rules for crossing streets.
- Being careful if you need to walk on lawns, which may get slippery with evening dew as the night comes on.

Halloween traditions have certain safety protocols unique to this holiday. In particular:

- Approach houses only if they have outside lights on.
- Be respectful and avoid causing any damage to property owners' landscape by not walking on lawns or in flowerbeds; use the safer driveways and sidewalks.
- Do not eat treats while walking; wait until you get home.
- Do not run from house to house; it is not a race and running in a costume at dusk on unfamiliar terrain can cause slips, trips, and falls.

Finally, be careful with the treats. Take these precautions:

- Check all treats before letting kids of any age have them.
- Throw out items with torn wrappers.
- Discard items that may be outdated.
- Be careful giving young kids hard candy or other treats that could make them choke.
- Do not let kids – or you – gorge! Portion out treats over the next week or so.

Here are some Halloween statistics:

- The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that more than 36 million kids between the ages of 5 and 13 go trick or treating.
- Americans eat about 26 pounds of candy per year, much of it around Halloween.
- In one recent year, candy—including hard candy, chocolate candy, gummy bears, and gum—was associated with 19 percent of all choking-related visits to the emergency room by children ages 14 or younger.