

Halloween Safety Tips

BEFORE HALLOWEEN:

Plan costumes that are bright and reflective. Make sure that shoes fit well and that costumes are short enough to prevent tripping, entanglement or contact with flame. Consider adding reflective tape or striping to costumes and trick-or-treat bags for greater visibility. Secure emergency identification (name, address, phone number) discreetly within Halloween attire or on a bracelet. Because a mask can limit or block eyesight, consider non-toxic and hypoallergenic makeup or a decorative hat as a safe alternative. When shopping for costumes, wigs and accessories, purchase only those with a label indicating they are flame resistant.

Think twice before using simulated knives, guns or swords. If such props must be used, be certain they do not appear authentic and are soft and flexible to prevent injury. Obtain flashlights with fresh batteries for all children and their escorts. Plan ahead: use battery powered lanterns or chemical light sticks in place of candles in decorations and costumes. This is also a great time to buy fresh batteries for your home Smoke Detectors.

Teach children their home phone number and to how call 9-1-1 if they have an emergency or become lost. Remind them that 9-1-1 can be dialed free from any phone. Review with your children the principle of "Stop-Drop-Roll", should their clothes catch on fire. Openly discuss appropriate and inappropriate behavior at Halloween time. Consider purchasing individually packaged healthy food alternatives (or safe non-food treats) for those who visit your home. Take extra effort to eliminate tripping hazards on your porch and walkway. Check around your property for flower pots, low tree limbs, support wires or garden hoses that may prove hazardous to young children rushing from house to house. Learn or review CPR skills to aid someone who is choking or having a heart attack. Consider safe party guidelines when hosting an Adult or Office Party.

FUN ALTERNATIVES:

Find a special event or start one in your own neighborhood. Community Centers, Shopping Malls and Houses of Worship may have organized festivities. Share the fun by arranging a visit to a Retirement Home or Senior Center. Create an alliance with College Fraternities, Sororities or Service Clubs for children's face painting or a carnival.

BEFORE NIGHTFALL ON HALLOWEEN:

A good meal prior to parties and trick-or-treating will discourage youngsters from filling up on Halloween treats. Consider fire safety when decorating. Do not overload electrical outlets with holiday lighting or special effects, and do not block exit doors. While children can help with the fun of designing a Jack O' Lantern, leave the carving to adults. Always keep Jack O' Lanterns and hot electric lamps far away from drapes, decorations, flammable materials or areas where children and pets will be standing or walking. Plan and review with your children the route and behavior which is acceptable to you. Do not permit children to bicycle, roller-blade or skateboard.

Agree on a specific time when revelers must return home. Along with flashlights for all, older children and escorts should wear a wristwatch and carry coins for non-emergency phone calls. Confine, segregate or otherwise prepare household pets for an evening of frightful sights and sounds. Be sure that all dogs and cats are wearing collars and proper identification tags. Consult your veterinarian for further advice. Remind all household drivers to remain cautious and drive slowly throughout the community. Adult partygoers should establish and reward a designated driver.

WHEN TRICK-OR-TREATING:

A Parent or responsible Adult should *always* accompany young children on their neighborhood rounds. Remind Trick-or-Treaters: By using a flashlight, they can see and be seen by others. Stay in a group, walk slowly and communicate where you are going. Only trick-or-treat in well known neighborhoods at homes that have a porch light on. Remain on well-lit streets and always use the sidewalk. If no sidewalk is available, walk at the farthest edge of the roadway facing traffic. Never cut across yards or use alleys. Never enter a stranger's home or car for a treat. Obey all traffic and pedestrian regulations. Always walk. Never run across a street. Only cross the street as a group in established crosswalks.

Remove any mask or item that will limit eyesight before crossing a street, driveway or alley. Don't

assume the right of way. Motorists may have trouble seeing Trick-or-Treaters. Just because one car stops, doesn't mean others will. Never consume unwrapped food items or open beverages that may be offered. No treats are to be eaten until they are thoroughly checked by an Adult at home. Law Enforcement authorities should be notified immediately of any suspicious or unlawful activity.

AFTER TRICK-OR-TREATING:

Wait until children are home to sort and check treats. Though tampering is rare, a responsible adult should closely examine all treats and throw away any spoiled, unwrapped or suspicious items. Try to apportion treats for the days following Halloween. Although sharing is encouraged, make sure items that can cause choking (such as hard candies), are given only to those of an appropriate age.

We wish you a safe and happy Halloween!