



Halloween Safety Tips for Trick-or-Treaters and Their Hosts

Halloween is really scary when you're not playing it safe. But with a little planning, it's a treat for children and their parents that stick to safe neighborhood walking routes, street crossings, costuming and candy.

The following Halloween safety tips are from the National Safety Council's Family Safety and Health, Fall 2006 magazine:

Preparation

Plan and review with your children the trick-or-treating route. Young children should be accompanied by an older teen or responsible adult.

Agree on a specific time when children must return home.

Equip all children with flashlights. Older children should wear a watch and carry money for non-emergency phone calls.

Costumes

Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries on Halloween, according to the National Safety Council. Costumes should be kept short to prevent trips.

Use makeup instead of masks so the child's vision is unobstructed. Children wearing masks should remove them before crossing a street, driveway or alley.

Secure emergency identification discreetly within the costume or on a bracelet. Never put a child's name in a place where a stranger might see it.

Think before using toy knives, guns or swords. If such props must be used, be certain they do not look authentic and are soft and flexible to prevent injury.

Costumes should be loose to accommodate warm clothing underneath.

Out and about

Children should only go to homes where the residents are known and have outside lights on as a sign of welcome.

Children should not enter homes unless accompanied by an adult.

People expecting trick-or-treaters should remove all obstacles from their lawns, steps and porches.

Candlelit jack-o'-lanterns should be kept away from landings and doorsteps where costumes could brush against the flame. Indoor jack-o'-lanterns should be kept away from curtains, decorations and other furnishings.

Do not permit children to bicycle, rollerblade or skateboard.

Remind children to remain on well-lit streets and always use the sidewalk. Children should stay in a group and walk slowly.

Children should cross the street only as a group and in established crosswalks.

Treats

When in doubt, throw it out.

Make sure items that can cause choking are only given to older children.

Place candy in a place where you control who can access it.

General safety tips

Teach children their home phone number and how to dial 911 if they have an emergency or become lost. Remind them that 911 can be dialed free from any phone.

Review the principle of "stop-drop-roll" should children's clothes catch on fire.

Learn or review CPR skills to aid someone who may be choking or having a heart attack.

Law enforcement should be notified of any suspicious activity.

Know the names of older children's companions.

Teach children basic, everyday safety, such as not getting into cars or talking to strangers, looking both ways before crossing the street, and crossing with the lights, to make them safer.