



## Safety Tips for a Happy Halloween

Halloween can be a scary time for parents, especially when the children get old enough to trick-or-treat by themselves. These safety tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics can help make Halloween safer for you and your family.

### **COSTUMES**

1. Black may be a Halloween color, but it's hard to see those little ninjas, black cats, and witches after dark. Choose bright, reflective costumes. Try adding reflective tape to costumes and trick or treat bags.
2. Costumes should be short enough to keep your child from tripping. Excess fabric is a fire hazard if it comes into contact with a pumpkin candle. Make sure your child wears shoes that fit properly.
3. Use flashlights and make sure they have fresh batteries.
4. Check that masks don't block or limit your child's vision. Consider non-toxic makeup instead.
5. Before purchasing costumes, wigs, and accessories, check labels to verify that they are flame-retardant.
6. Avoid costumes with small parts or strings that can choke or strangle small children.
7. Attach emergency identification information (name, address, phone number) inside their Halloween costume or around your child's wrist.
8. Have a responsible adult accompany young trick-or-treaters.

### **PUMPKIN CARVING**

1. Don't let the little ones carve pumpkins. Have them draw the pumpkin face with markers. An adult or older sibling can do the carving.
2. Kids from 5 – 10 years old should use pumpkin cutters equipped with safety bars and be supervised during carving.
3. Use a small, flame-less LED candle for pumpkins.

### **DECORATING**

1. Remove anything that could trip a trick-or-treater, such as garden hoses, toys, lawn decorations, etc.
2. Replace burned-out bulbs on outdoor lights.
3. Sweep away wet leaves, as they can be slippery.
4. Remember fire safety. Be careful not to overload electrical outlets with holiday lighting or special effects.

### **TREATS**

1. Instead of candy, consider giving away non-food items such as pencils, stickers, etc.
2. Sort through the treat bags when your kids get home and toss out anything spoiled, unwrapped, or homemade.
3. Watch out for hard candies and other treats that could cause choking.
4. Try to ration out the treats over the days following Halloween.



## When They're Trick-or-Treating Without You

Once your children are old enough to trick-or-treat by themselves, you'll want to set some safety parameters. Here are some safety tips to give your kids:

1. Plan your route and tell your parents where you are going. No changes in itinerary!
2. Stay in groups of three or more and stick together.
3. Use a flashlight so you can see, and others can see you.
4. Only go to homes with a porch light on.
5. Stay on well-lit streets and use the sidewalk, not the street.
6. Never cut across yards or use alleys.
7. Obey all traffic and pedestrian regulations.
8. Walk — don't run — across the street and cross in the crosswalk, as a group.
9. If your mask or costume restricts your vision, remove it before you cross the street and wherever the lighting is low.

## Safety Tips for Teens

Teens can get into all kinds of mischief on Halloween, so take this opportunity to talk about laws around private property, vandalism, town curfews, and alcohol regulations. Remind them that police are on the look out for troublesome teenagers and may profile groups of teens, especially boys, as being “up to no good.” This is a good opportunity to talk to teens about the pitfalls of social media. Tell them not to post or text anything that could get them into trouble.

- Suggest alternatives to trick or treating. Consider hosting a Halloween party or scary movie marathon for your teen and his or her friends and make sure you are home the whole time! Offer to drive teens to a horror film or “haunted house.” Recruit your teen to hand out treats or host a trunk-or-treat.
- If a teenager is going out, set a curfew. Actively monitor texts, social media posts, and cell phone activity to keep tabs on your teen's whereabouts and see what he/she is up to.
- Encourage light colored clothing and/or reflective wear.
- Help prevent “tricks” and trouble! Hide the eggs and extra toilet paper, and make sure teens don't have access to alcohol.

## TEEN DRIVER SAFETY

Halloween is a bad time for anyone to be on the road, let alone an inexperienced driver. Remind your teen to drive slowly and be on the look out for little kids darting out into the street. Limit the number of passengers riding with your teen. Review the following rules from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- No cell phones while driving
- No extra passengers
- No speeding
- No alcohol
- No driving or riding without a seat belt