



Halloween Safety Information for Parents

Halloween is an exciting time for children, but it can also be a dangerous time. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), children are four times more likely to be in fatal pedestrian accidents on Halloween than on any other night of the year. This statistic isn't meant to scare you – it's meant to help you prepare your children for a safe Halloween.

There are seven basic reasons why children are more likely to be hurt in pedestrian accidents:

1. They often choose to take the shortest route, which may mean darting out between parked cars, rather than take the safer route of crossing at corners.
2. They're poor at evaluating potential traffic threats.
3. They're more likely to disregard their peripheral vision and are less attentive of their street surroundings.
4. They have a tendency to believe they're indestructible and are more likely to take risks.
5. They need to be told that some people driving cars will not slow down for them.
6. They can't cross streets as rapidly as adults.
7. They may be distracted by other children's costumes, behaviors, and home decorations.

Here are some important Halloween safety tips that every parent should know:

- Purchase or make Halloween costumes from flame-resistant materials.
- Pick brightly colored costumes or add your own reflective tape so motorists can see them.
- Attach your child's name, address, and phone number somewhere inside the costume.
- An adult should always accompany children under age 12.
- To avoid tripping, make sure your child's costume is not too long, and that shoes are the proper size.
- Use washable face paint instead of masks, so your child's vision isn't compromised.
- Plan the route your children are going to take, especially if they're going out unsupervised. They should go in a group.
- Teach your children never to respond to a driver or pedestrian that calls out to them.
- Provide your children with a healthy meal ahead of time, so they don't get hungry before returning home.
- Make sure your children don't eat any candy or food without checking with you first.
- Keep your walkway free of debris so that children coming to your house won't trip or fall.
- Keep your pets away from the front door so they won't scare trick-or-treaters.
- Tell your children not to go to homes with barking, jumping dogs and not to approach any stray animals.
- Make sure your children have flashlights, especially if they're staying out after dark.
- Establish an appropriate curfew for children to return home.
- Make sure your children have change for a phone call and know their phone number.
- Don't let young children carve pumpkins. Get them involved by drawing the outlines before you cut them out as well as helping with other decorations.
- Don't hand out candy that could be a possible choking hazard to younger children.
- Teach your children to stay on the sidewalks and cross only at corners.
- Teach your children to look, listen, and be aware of cars not stopping at corners.
- Teach your children to only go to houses with porch lights on, and to never enter anyone's house.



Sources:

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/services/hss/tips/october/octtips.html

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmhtml/00049687.htm

Safer Child, Inc.

www.saferchild.org/fall.htm

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