

Teach children Halloween safety tips

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Melissa Khan
(334) 206-5541
molmstead@adph.state.al.us

Carol Mysinger
(334) 206-5571
cmysinger@adph.state.al.us

Halloween is a time of costumes and candy, but it may also be a time of potential danger if proper safety measures are not taken during the frantic trick-or-treating festivities.

"Parents can help their children avoid injuries by teaching them simple safety tips before they go out trick-or-treating," said Melissa Khan, injury epidemiologist with the Injury Prevention Division, Alabama Department of Public Health.

Parents should warn children to bring their treats home before eating them so that they can ensure that items have not been tampered with and are safely sealed. Some candy products have a white powdery material or a fine sugary residue on them. Inspect fruit surfaces closely for punctures or holes, wash it thoroughly and cut it open before allowing a child to eat it. **Throw away** any suspicious fruits, candy, toys, novelty items or items small enough to present a choking hazard.

This Halloween the Alabama Department of Public Health recommends parents and children follow these safety tips:

FALLS

On Halloween night, cumbersome costumes and blinding masks can make walking safely through dark neighborhoods difficult. The following tips can help prevent fall-related injuries:

- * Apply face paint or cosmetics directly to the face. It is safer than a loose-fitting mask that can obstruct a child's vision. If a mask is worn, be certain it fits securely. Cut the eye holes large enough for full vision.
- * Give trick-or-treaters flashlights.
- * Make costumes short enough to avoid tripping.
- * Secure hats so they will not slip over children's eyes.
- * Dress children in shoes that fit. Adult shoes are not safe for trick-or-treaters. The larger size makes it easier for them to trip and fall.

* Allow children to carry only flexible knives, swords or other props. Anything they carry could injure them if they fall.

* Teach children not to cut across yards. Lawn ornaments and clotheslines are "hidden hazards" in the dark. Tell your children to stay on the sidewalk at all times.

PEDESTRIAN INJURIES

Darting out into the street is one of the most common causes of pedestrian death among children. Following these tips may help prevent injuries:

Visibility

* Decorate costumes, bags and sacks with reflective tape and stickers.

* Use costumes that are light or bright enough to make children more visible at night.

Traffic

* Teach children to walk, not run, while trick-or-treating.

* Remind children to stop at all street corners before crossing. Tell them to cross streets only at intersections and crosswalks.

* Teach them to look left, right and left again before crossing the street and to continue looking both ways as they cross.

* Teach them never to dart out into a street or cross between parked cars.

AWAY FROM HOME

* Warn children to only go to houses or apartments where they know the residents. Accompany children under the age 12 on their trick-or-treat rounds.

* If possible, parents should provide unattended children over the age of 12 with cell phones for emergencies.

* Instruct children to travel only in familiar areas and along a preestablished route.

* Instruct children never to enter a home or an apartment building unless accompanied by an adult.

* Set a time for children to return home.

* Restrict trick-or-treating visits to homes with porch or outside lights illuminated.

* Remove breakable items or obstacles such as tools, ladders and children's toys from your steps, lawn and porch. Keep jack-o-lanterns lit with candles away from landings or doorsteps where costumes might brush against the flame.

