

# Hallowe'en Safety Tips

Protect your children from preventable accidents and injuries by following these simple, common sense Hallowe'en safety tips.

## **Supervision**

- Trick-or-treaters under the age 12 should be supervised at all times.
- If you decide your child is old enough to go trick-or-treating with friends, make sure they walk in a group, that they know their route of travel and that a curfew has been established and agreed upon. Alternatively, it's a good idea to offer to 'tag along' in the distance.
- Most apartment and condominium buildings only allow residents to give out candy in the front lobby. If this is not the case, we recommend that you take your children into the building floor by floor – and only if you are very familiar with the building.
- Teach your children to stay away from strangers, to refuse to approach or get inside cars, and to stay away from stray animals.



## **Pedestrian Safety Rules**

Children are not accustomed to being out after dark so it is wise to review pedestrian safety rules.

- Children should be instructed to use the walkways rather than crossing through yards to avoid dark or deserted homes.
- Children should never enter a house without your knowledge and supervision.
- Instruct children to stay on one side of the street instead of criss-crossing back and forth.
- Familiar and well-lit streets provide the best and happiest trick-or-treat experience.

## Costumes

- Give your child a flashlight while trick-or-treating. It will increase visibility, provide a sense of security – not to mention act as a whimsical tool.
- Applying reflective tape or fluorescent or bright colours to your child's costume and loot bag will make your child more visible to motorists and other trick-or-treaters.
- Although seeing your children in oversized clothing is really cute - it isn't safe. Even older children can trip on costumes that are too long.
- Ensure your child is wearing sturdy shoes – not clumsy footwear.
- Sometimes Hallowe'en night can be chilly so make sure that costumes are loose enough to be worn over warm clothing.



- The Hallowe'en costume should be safe and non-flammable. Look for flame-resistant labels on costumes, masks and other Hallowe'en gear. Use flame-resistant fabric for homemade costumes.



- Ensure that children keep their distance from jack-o'-lanterns and candles.
- Masks are designed to look funny or scary but they can obstruct a child's vision and also make it difficult to breathe. Consider using non-toxic, hypo-allergenic face paint instead – especially for the little trick-or-treaters. It also might be more fun! Most children really like 'face-painting'!

■ Accessories such as wands and swords should be soft and flexible, not rigid or sharp.

- Wigs and beards should not cover the eyes or mouth and ensure headgear doesn't slide over your child's face.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Safety experts state that government-mandated tests and standards are inadequate to judge the safety of Hallowe'en costumes.



- Manufacturers and importers are not required to test fabrics or pieces of clothing for fire safety - even those with fire-retardant labels.
- Flame-retardant material is not flameproof. Tests have shown that some

materials with fire-retardant labels actually burned more quickly than materials with labels that read 'keep away from fire'.

- Thin, flimsy or mesh-type Hallowe'en costumes should be avoided. In one test, the white mesh skirt on an angel costume took one second to ignite. A small label reading 'keep away from flame' was on the back of the packaging.

## Candy

- Make sure your children understand the importance of having all candy and other treats inspected by their parents.
- Younger children may need an adult to hold their treat bags so that the temptation to taste 'just one piece' isn't so great.
- When trick-or-treating is over inspect your child's loot. If any item of candy is not wrapped, looks suspicious, torn, opened or tampered with - throw it away. Even candy that is well wrapped may pose a choking hazard.
- **Homemade treats or fruit should only be eaten if you know the giver.**



- If your child has food allergies, be extra careful. If anything at all is questionable, throw it out. Some children have suffered severe allergic reactions because a candy contained a trace amount of nuts.
- Inspecting every treat your child receives is very important. Children have choked, some fatally, on candy, gum, small toys and coins.
- When shelling out candy to young trick-or-treaters avoid giving them treats such as gum, peanuts and hard candies – they can present potential choking hazards.

## Pumpkins

- The Hallowe'en countdown includes the annual selection and carving of that perfect pumpkin. Let your children draw the face on the pumpkin but never let them handle the knife or do the carving – even older children should not carve the pumpkin. Let them clean up instead.
- Keep candles, jack-o-lanterns, matches and lighters in a secure place that children cannot reach.
- Always position lit jack-o'-lanterns away from curtains and other flammable objects. Keep them out of the path of trick-or-treaters.
- Never leave lit pumpkins unattended. A light bulb or flashlight is a safer alternative.



## ***Safety Tips for Drivers***

- Ensure the safety of trick-or-treaters by driving slowly and defensively. Don't assume that children in costume can move quickly.
- Keep a keen eye for trick-or-treaters darting out from between parked cars. Watch out for children in the street and on medians, exit driveways and alleyways.
- When driving children around the neighbourhood, have them exit the car on the curb side - not the traffic side.



## ***Preparing Your Home for Hallowe'en***

- Replace burned-out bulbs in the exterior light fixtures of your property. Leave your exterior lights on later than usual.
- Prepare your home for trick-or-treaters by clearing all pathways.
- Make sure the path to your door is well lit and your lawn is clear of all obstructions that children could trip over, such as ladders, garden hoses, flowerpots, bikes, etc.
- Sweep all wet leaves from sidewalks and stairs.
- Keep pets inside and away from trick-or-treaters and lit candles, especially if they are easily frightened or become over-excited in the presence of strangers.

**Happy Halloween**