

October 29, 2009

Tips for safe trick-or-treating

Ghosts and witches aren't the only scary part of Halloween. While Halloween is a fun time for youngsters, the excitement of the night combined with costumes, the weather, and darkness can also make it dangerous.

You can't control the weather or the darkness, but there are some things you can do to make Halloween safer, says Dr. Gerry Predy, Senior Medical Officer of Health with Alberta Health Services.

Costumes

- Children should wear face paint or make-up instead of a mask that interferes with their vision.
- If your child is wearing a mask or a head piece, ensure he/she can see clearly from the front and both sides.
- Footwear and costumes should fit properly.
- Put reflective tape on costumes and treat bags. This makes your children more visible.
- Never allow children to carry sharp, dangerous costume props, such as knives or swords.

Trick-or-treat goodies

- Children should bring their treats home so an adult can inspect them.
- Never let children eat candy that has loose or open wrappers.
- Wash all fruit, and cut it into pieces to inspect it before eating.

Jack-o-lantern carving

- Always supervise children while they are carving pumpkins.
- Children can be involved by drawing the face on the pumpkin and by cleaning the inside. An adult should make any cuts on the pumpkin.
- Instead of carving the face, paint or draw the face on the jack-o-lantern.

General tips

- Stay in well-lit areas and carry a flashlight.
- Children should trick-or-treat with an adult or in a group -- never alone. Children under eight should always be accompanied by an adult.
- Don't allow children to play near jack-o-lanterns with candles burning.
- Always walk on sidewalks. Cross the street at crosswalks or street corners.
- Walk, don't run.
- Trick-or-treat at the homes of people you know.

Tips for adults

- Drive slowly, especially in residential areas. Be on the lookout for trick-or-treaters.
- Keep lit jack-o-lanterns out of the way of trick-or-treaters.
- Remove hazardous obstacles in your yard.
- When giving out treats, leave your porch light on. This lights the way for children.

Residents with any other health-related concerns can call Health Link Alberta to speak to a registered nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 780-408-LINK (5465) or outside the local calling area, toll free at 1-866-408-LINK (5465).

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than 3.5 million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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