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Halloween Safety Tips

By Susan Dunn

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by: **Susan Dunn, MA**

Halloween is an exciting night for children and a busy time for their parents. With such excitement, it's easy for children to forget basic safety rules.

When emotions are running high, it's a good time to remember to "use your head." Plan ahead and plan to have a safe Halloween. Raise safety awareness with your family before the festivities begin. We do the right thing, but we don't always explain it to children. As you place a saucer under each tea light, or "stop, look and listen" at street corners and in parking lots, tell your child why. They don't always connect the dots unless you point it out.

Here are some Halloween Safety Tips to keep in mind:

1. Stay sober and alert.

It's amazing how many family Halloween celebrations involve adults drinking. It's impossible to monitor children's safety or your own when you've had too much to drink, so don't.

2. Avoid cuts and burns when decorating.

Carving the pumpkin, placing luminaria in the driveway, and hanging spooky skeletons all present opportunities for injury. If you're decorating with candles, observe fires safety. Have a good fire extinguisher handy and make sure everyone knows where it is.

3. Observe ladder safety regulations.

According to the NASD, accidents involving ladders cause an estimated 300 death a year in the US, and 130,000 injuries requiring medical attention. Review ladder safety rules and observe them.

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4. Make sure "treats" aren't "tricks."

Many people these days choose to go to fairs or private parties instead of trick or treating for safety reasons. If your child is going trick or treating, go with them. Make it a rule that nothing is to be eaten until it's first been inspected by you.

5. Caution your child about strangers and dogs.

Keep your children with you and remind them to avoid people and dogs they don't know. Many people are taking their dog companions out in costume these days, and even the most gentle of family pets can do something unexpected with all the excitement.

6. Accidental falls is the number one cause of injuries on Halloween night (National Safety Council).

Choose your child's costume with this in mind. Hem up the hemlines. If you choose a mask, choose one that doesn't obstruct sight. Stay sober and observe safety rules when decorating.

7. Four times more children are killed in pedestrian/automobile accidents on Halloween night than on any other night of the year.

The CDC suggests these factors make it a high risk: short stature, inability to react quickly enough to avoid a car or evaluate a potential traffic threat, lack of impulse control, and all the exciting distractions.

8. The holiday syndrome.

The excitement, more candy, more parties, less sleep, less nutritious food, and getting off schedule all mean less attentiveness and also possibly illness. Keep routines as normal as you can.

9. Choose safe and sensible costumes.

Choose fire retardant costumes that allow children free movement and good visibility. Be careful about accessories. Even toy knives and swords can cause harm. Give each child a flashlight.

10. Set a good example.

Show that you care about safety and make it a top priority.

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Halloween Safety For Your Family

By Ralph Winn

Ghosts and ghouls will be about this October 31. But you must protect your little goblins from the real dangers that are out there on Halloween. Keep your kids safe and your holiday fun with these Halloween safety tips.

Halloween Safety Tip #1: See and Be Seen

It's usually dark when kids go trick or treating, and in their costumes, they can be very hard for drivers to see. Your kids will be crossing the street and walking along the sidewalk, so keep them safe from traffic by making sure they are clearly visible to drivers. You can do this in two ways. One, keep their costumes light. Dress them in light colors like white, or orange, or yellow. However, this only works for kids dressed as ghosts, pumpkins, or bananas. You can also outfit your child with a reflective vest or tape that will light up in drivers' headlights. Make sure your children won't be left in the dark – keep the little monsters visible.

Halloween Safety Tip #2: Arm Against Animals

Your neighborhood is probably full of pets, raccoons, badgers, and opossums. Protect your children from loose dogs or angry raccoons with animal repellent. Security Stores sells canine repellent that will fend off smaller animals and even stronger bear repellent that will get the big guys.

Halloween Safety Tip #3: Arm Against Bad Guys

Dogs and bears aren't the only living danger children can run into. When it comes to Halloween safety, protecting your child from people who mean to do harm to them is parents' number one concern. We sell pepper sprays that can effectively disarm a criminal and give your child time to run and scream for help.

Halloween Safety Tip #4: Make Some Noise

Personal safety alarms will draw attention to your child's situation immediately. If a stranger approaches and tries to attack your child, they can set off their personal safety alarm, which will emit a high pitched siren to call for help. Often, the criminal will run away.

Halloween Safety Tip #5: Go Along for the Fun

The best way to protect your kids during Halloween trick-or-treating is to accompany them on the adventure. Younger children should always be supervised by an adult, and older kids, though they may not want a parent tagging along, will be safer with mom or dad around. You don't have to ring to the doorbell for them. You can just hang back a little and observe, increasing the Halloween safety of your children.

Halloween Safety Tip #6: Examine Before You Eat

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Your Halloween safety vigilance doesn't end when you get home. Before your children eat any of their treats, inspect the candy for anything that looks suspicious. Homemade candies, though they can be a thoughtful effort by a well-meaning neighbor, are dangerous because you don't know what is in them. The same goes for unwrapped candies – they may have been tampered with. Once you have confirmed that your child's candy is safe, then you can let them go nuts. You'll feel better knowing that all they'll get is a bit hyper and maybe a sick tummy.

Halloween safety should be your number one concern this Halloween, but once that's taken care of, you and your family can have a spooky, scary, fun holiday filled with all the treats – and none of the tricks.

Ralph Winn has over 32 years of experience in the security industry. Throughout his career, he has developed cost effective security programs for numerous small, medium, large commercial and government properties and for many nationally known corporations.

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