



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104

Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5534

[www.adph.org](http://www.adph.org)

---

## Parents can help children avoid Halloween injuries

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Carol Mysinger  
(334) 206-5571  
[cmysinger@adph.state.al.us](mailto:cmysinger@adph.state.al.us)

Although Halloween is a time of costumes and candy for children, parents should focus on their safety. The holiday can pose many dangers, and parents need to warn children about them so they can have a fun and injury-free Halloween.

According to the National SAFEKIDS Campaign, children are four times more likely to die as pedestrians on Halloween night than any other night of the year. There is also an increase in burns and falls during Halloween activities.

"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.

To avoid cumbersome costumes, dangerous treats and risky activity on Halloween night the Alabama Department of Public Health recommends parents and children follow these safety tips:

### COSTUMES

- \* Apply face paint or cosmetics directly to the face, because 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.

\* Decorate costumes, bags and sacks with reflective tape and stickers or use costumes that are light or bright enough to make children more visible at night.

\* Look for flame-resistant labels on costumes, masks, beards and wigs. Also, avoid costumes made of flimsy material and outfits with big, baggy, sleeves or billowing skirts which can come in contact with an exposed flame such as a candle.

## TREATS

\* 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.

\* Inspect fruit surfaces closely for punctures or holes, wash fruit thoroughly and cut each piece 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.

## ACTIVITIES

\* Teach children to walk, not run, while trick-or-treating. Darting out into the street is one of the most common causes of pedestrian death among children.

\* 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.

\* 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.

\* 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.

10/25/04