



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Health department offers autumn season safety tips

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For many children, autumn events such as Halloween and Harvest Day are fun times to dress up in costumes, go trick-or-treating, attend parties and eat yummy treats. These events are also opportunities to provide nutritious snacks, get physical activity, and focus on safety.

"The Alabama Department of Public Health recommends that parents discuss safety tips with their children before they go trick-or-treating and take precautions to ensure their safety," said Jamey Durham, director of the Injury Prevention Branch.

The health department joins the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in making these recommendations to help make the festivities fun and safe for trick-or-treaters and party guests.

Treats:

- Children should not snack while they're out trick-or-treating.
- To help prevent children from munching, give them a snack or light meal before they go--don't send them out on an empty stomach.
- Children should not accept--and, especially, not eat--anything that isn't commercially wrapped.
- Inspect commercially wrapped treats for signs of tampering, such as an unusual appearance or discoloration, tiny pinholes, or tears in wrappers.
- Discard any home-made candy or baked goods.
- Parents of young children should also remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies or small toys.
- Throw away anything that looks suspicious.

Flame Resistant Costumes:

- When purchasing a costume, masks, beards, and wigs, look for the label Flame Resistant.
- Although this label does not mean these items will not catch fire, it does indicate the items will resist burning and should extinguish quickly once removed from the ignition source.
- To minimize the risk of contact with candles or other sources of ignition, avoid costumes made with flimsy materials and outfits with big, baggy sleeves or billowing skirts.

Costume Designs:

Purchase or make costumes that are light and bright enough to be clearly visible to motorists.

- For greater visibility during dusk and darkness, decorate or trim costumes with reflective tape that will glow in the beam of a car's headlights. Bags or sacks should also be light colored or decorated with reflective tape. Reflective tape is usually available in hardware, bicycle, and sporting goods stores.
- To easily see and be seen, children should also carry flashlights.
- Costumes should be short enough to prevent children from tripping and falling.
- Children should wear well-fitting, sturdy shoes. Mother's high heels are not a good idea for safe walking.
- Hats and scarves should be tied securely to prevent them from slipping over children's eyes.
- Apply a natural mask of cosmetics rather than have a child wear a loose-fitting mask that might restrict breathing or obscure vision. If a mask is used, however, make sure it fits securely and has eyeholes large enough to allow full vision.
- Swords, knives and similar costume accessories should be of soft and flexible material.

Pedestrian Safety:

- Young children should always be accompanied by an adult or an older, responsible child.
- All children should WALK, not run from house to house and use the sidewalk if available, rather than walk in the street.
- Children should be cautioned against running out from between parked cars, or across lawns and yards where ornaments, furniture or clotheslines present dangers.

Choosing Safe Houses:

Children should go only to homes where the residents are known and have outside lights on as a sign of welcome.

For more information about preventing injuries, visit <http://adph.org/injuryprevention/>