

UC San Diego Health Experts Offer Halloween Tips

By Michelle Brubaker | October 28, 2013

No Trick to Treating Children (and Adults) to a Safe Halloween

The Regional Burn Center and Emergency Departments at UC San Diego Health - along with the California Poison Control System - San Diego Division located at UC San Diego Medical Center - offer the following safety precautions to help parents and guardians make Halloween safe this year.

Burn Prevention

- → Keep an eye on Jack-O-Lanterns with burning candles inside. Make sure they're placed where they cannot ignite a fire.
- → Look for costumes, wigs and masks that are flame resistant and with enough room for a child to dress warmly underneath. Flame resistant does not mean the fabric won't catch fire, only that it will resist burning and should extinguish quickly once removed from the ignition's source.

Safe Eating

- → Feed children before they go trick-or-treating. Select a small amount of candy or other food to eat while trick-or-treating so they won't be tempted to eat from the bag before their treats can be checked.
- → Look carefully at all treats to detect signs of tampering. Throw away unwrapped candy or treats not in the original wrapper, candy with faded or torn wrappers and candies that show signs of rewrapping.
- → Parents with children of different ages should sort the candies to make sure that younger kids don't get hold of small hard candies, peanuts or other objects that may get lodged in a youngster's throat.



- → Remember, some treats, especially chocolate, can be poisonous to pets.

Costume Musts

- → Face paints, glues and glitters should be made of non-toxic materials. Some children have allergic reactions to these products, such as a rash or itching. If this occurs, remove the make-up immediately and thoroughly cleanse the skin with mild soap and water. If your child wears a mask, make sure it does not impair the child's vision or breathing.
- → Physicians recommend kids wear flat shoes with their costumes and make sure the costumes are short enough to prevent the child from tripping.

Trick-or-Treating Tips

- → Never let a child trick-or-treat alone. An adult should accompany young children in familiar neighborhoods, visiting known areas.
- → Walk on the sidewalk and only stop by houses that have the front porch light on.
- → Carry a flashlight after dusk and watch for cars.
- → Make walkways and lawns safe by removing obstacles and leaving outside lights on.
- → Stay away from barking dogs or other upset animals.
- → Choose costumes with light or bright colors, which can be seen by drivers.
- → Use reflective tape on costumes and trick-or-treat bags so that they are highly visible.
- → Halloween also means parties for parents. Make sure all alcohol and cigarette butts are cleaned up as these items can poison small children.

Parents who find any candy that has been tampered with should report the incident to the police department. If children are experiencing any symptoms following ingestion of food or candy, parents should call the California Poison Control System - San Diego Division at 800-222-1222. The Poison Center is open 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

Alcohol Consumption Warning

Emergency physicians in UC San Diego Health's emergency departments say they experience an upswing in alcohol-related incidents. "Unfortunately, we can almost always count on an increase," said Theodore Chan, MD, Medical Director of UC San Diego's emergency department. "Those numbers can be reduced if adult partiers take a moderate approach to alcohol consumption and designate a driver before the evening's festivities begin."

Related Specialties

Burn Center

Emergency Medicine

Toxicology/Poison Control
