

## Halloween Safety: Tips for Trick-or-Treaters

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It's the time of year for costumes, sweets, and tricks or treats. Put Halloween safety first with these common-sense tips offered by the staff at Mayo Clinic.



**Before you start carving pumpkins, consider these Halloween safety rules:**

- **Decorate with markers, glitter glue or paint.** Let young children draw faces on pumpkins with art supplies. Leave any carving to an adult.
- **Use candles with care.** Place candlelit pumpkins on a sturdy surface away from curtains and other flammable objects. Never leave candlelit pumpkins unattended. Better yet, light pumpkins with flashlights, battery-operated flameless candles or glow sticks instead.

**From furry animals to princesses and superheroes, choosing costumes wisely is an important part of Halloween safety. Follow these tips:**

- **The brighter the better.** Whether you buy a costume or make one yourself, choose bright colors and flame-retardant materials. If your child will be trick-or-treating outdoors after dark, attach reflective tape to his or her costume or treat bag.
- **Size it right.** In case it's chilly outdoors, make sure your child's costume is loose enough for warm clothing to be worn underneath — but not long enough to cause tripping. Avoid oversized shoes and high heels.
- **Skip the masks.** A mask can obstruct your child's vision, especially if it slips out of place. Use kid-friendly, non-toxic makeup instead.
- **Limit accessories.** Pointed props — such as wands, swords and knives — might pose safety hazards.

**Before your children start trick-or-treating, review these basic Halloween safety rules:**

- **Get in on the fun.** Accompany trick-or-treaters younger than age 12. Pin a piece of paper with your child's name, address and phone number inside your child's pocket in case you get separated. Encourage older kids to trick or treat with a group of friends, parents or older siblings. Make sure someone in the group has a flashlight with fresh batteries.

- **Set ground rules.** If your child will be trick-or-treating without you, plan and discuss a familiar route and set a curfew. Review safety rules, including staying with the group, walking only on the sidewalk, approaching only clearly lit homes and never going inside a home or car for a treat. Have your child carry a cellphone for the evening so he or she can contact you.
- **Inspect the treats carefully.** Don't let your child snack while he or she is trick-or-treating. Feed your child an early meal before heading out, and inspect the treats before allowing your child to dive in. Discard anything that's not sealed, has torn packaging or looks questionable. If you have young children, weed out gum, peanuts, hard candies and other choking hazards.
- **Ration the loot.** If your child collects gobs of goodies, dole out a few pieces at a time and save the rest. You might even ask your child if he or she would like to swap some — or all — of the candy for something else, such as a special toy, book or outing. You might also suggest donating excess candy to a food pantry or other charity.
- **Plan a party.** Consider planning a trick or treat party with a couple of neighbors instead of house-to-house door knocking. Decorate the garage, have a costume contest, and plan games and prizes.

**Planning to hand out treats? To make sure you're ready for trick-or-treaters, follow these tips:**

- **Clean up.** Put away anything trick-or-treaters could trip over, such as garden hoses, toys, bikes and lawn decorations. Clear wet leaves, snow or other debris from the sidewalk.
- **Turn the lights on.** Replace any burned-out bulbs to ensure good visibility at the walkway and front door.
- **Control your pets.** Take no chances that your pet might be frightened and chase or bite a child at your door.
- **Consider sugar substitutes.** Instead of handing out sugar-laden treats, try stickers, fun pencils, rubber insects or colored chalk.

If you'll be driving on Halloween, watch for children who might pop out between parked cars. Be especially careful entering or leaving driveways and alleys. Extra caution can help ensure Halloween safety for everyone.

For more information, contact the Wildcat Extension District, Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Labette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Wildcat District Extension is on the Web at <http://www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu>. Or, like our Facebook page at [facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district](https://www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district).

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## Easy Peanut Butter Popcorn Balls

Yield: 14 popcorn balls

### INGREDIENTS

- 11 cups air-popped popcorn
- 2/3 cup honey
- 1/2 cup natural peanut butter, creamy or chunky
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, optional
- 1/2 cup dried fruit of your choice (optional)

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Line a baking sheet with wax paper and set aside.
2. Put the popcorn into a large mixing bowl.
3. In a heavy, medium saucepan over medium-high heat, combine the honey, peanut butter, and salt. Stir frequently until it comes to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer 1 minute.
4. Pour the honey mixture over the popcorn and stir with a silicone spatula. When it's nearly coated, add dried fruit to the mixture, if desired, and stir until combined.
5. Let popcorn sit until cool enough to handle, then use lightly greased hands to press firmly into balls about 2 ½ inches in diameter. Place balls on paper-lined baking sheet to cool completely.
6. Store at room temperature in an air-tight container for up to a week—can be wrapped individually and used as lunchbox or holiday treats.



**Nutritional Facts: Per 1/14<sup>th</sup> of recipe with dried cranberries:** Calories, 140; Total Fat, 4.5g; Saturated Fat, 1g; Cholesterol, 0mg; Sodium, 80mg; Total Carbs, 23g; Dietary Fiber, 2g; Sugar, 16g; Protein, 3g. Iron 2%

### Helpful Hints:

- To make cleanup easier, coat the mixing bowl and the measuring cups with nonstick spray before you begin.
- Popcorn is a special variety of dried corn that has moisture in the kernel. When this moisture is heated, it turns to steam, and when the pressure gets too great, the kernel pops! It explodes, turns inside out and expands up to 35 times its original size. Be careful to use only popped kernels when preparing the popcorn balls. Biting into a hard kernel can hurt a tooth.
- **Safety Tip:** Popcorn is a delicious, healthy snack, but it can cause a young child to choke. Do not give popcorn to children under 3 years of age. Kids need to sit down while eating, and adult supervision is important when popcorn is served.