

K-State Extension Connection

Halloween Safety: Tips for Trick-or-Treaters

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Fall celebrations like Halloween and Harvest Day are fun times for children who can dress up in costumes, enjoy parties, and eat yummy treats. Check out these tips offered by the staff at Mayo Clinic to help make the festivities fun and safe for trick-or-treaters and party guests.



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.

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 about this topic or other topics, contact the Wildcat Extension District offices at: Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Labette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Wilson County, 620-378-2167; 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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