



## Views from VanDeWalle

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### Happy (and safe) Halloween

From sporting their costumes and allowing their imaginations to run wild to collecting yummy treats, Halloween is a fun and exciting time! The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) released Halloween safety tips that I've summarized this week.

By the time this article is published, costumes may already be purchased; however you can still find ways to make the costumes bright and reflective. Consider adding reflective tap or striping to costumes and trick or treat bags. Ensure shoes fit well and costumes are short enough to prevent tripping. Hats and masks should allow youth to see properly and test any makeup ahead of time on a small patch of skin to ensure no unpleasant surprises on Halloween. If a sword or other prop is used be sure it is blunt and not too long in case your child stumbles or trips.

On the big trick-or-treat day, an adult should accompany young children. Obtain flashlights with fresh batteries for all children and their escorts. If older children are going alone, plan and review the route that is acceptable to you. Agree on a specific time they should return home. Only go to homes with a porch light on and never enter a home or care for a treat. The most common cause of injuries to children on Halloween is pedestrian injuries, therefore trick-or-treaters should:

- Stay in a group and communicate where they will be going.
- Use reflective tape for costumes and/or trick-or-treat containers.
- Carry a cellphone for quick communication. Review with children how to call 9-1-1 (or their emergency number) if they ever become lost or have an emergency.
- Remain on well-lit streets and always use a sidewalk where possible. If no sidewalk is available, walk at the far edge of the roadway facing traffic.
- Never cut across yards or use alleys.
- Only cross the street as a group in established crosswalks. Never cross between parked cars or driveways.
- Don't assume the right of way. Motorists may have trouble-seeing trick-or-treaters. Just because one car stops, doesn't mean others will!
- Contact law enforcement immediately of any suspicious or unlawful activity.

Those who plan to hand out treats should remember to remove any bikes, garden hoses or lawn decorations away from the porch or sidewalk to prevent visitors from tripping. Replace any outdoor lights and restrain pets so they do not inadvertently jump on or bite a trick-or-treater. Consider purchasing non-food treats for those who visit your home such as coloring books or pens and pencils.

Wait until children are home to sort and check treats. Though tampering is rare, a responsible adult should closely examine all treats and throw away any spoiled, unwrapped or suspicious items.



By following these simple tips, you can ensure your little trick-or-treaters can have a fun and exciting Halloween! Happy Halloween and don't forget to check out the Extension Office's spot at the Scare on the Square event in Geneva on October 31<sup>st</sup> from 4-5:30 p.m. We will be set up downtown by the courthouse

*This article used Halloween Safety Tips developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (2016).*