

# Tips For A Safe Halloween

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O'FALLON, IL - Halloween is an exciting time of year for children, as they dress up in creative costumes, carve up pumpkins and gather lots of sweets. But while it can be an enjoyable experience, it isn't without its preventable, safety risks. HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital and HSHS Medical Group encourage parents to become familiar with basic safety tips to make sure their kids stay safe on Halloween.

"A lot of general Halloween safety tips focus on candy safety, but traffic is a greater risk in terms of injury to children now than the possibility of consuming unsafe candy," noted Dr. Saba Bajwa, HSHS Medical Group family medicine pediatrician. "I

encourage parents to check all candy for food allergies or choking hazards before giving it to younger children and recommend that they ration the candy so their kids can enjoy it over several days and weeks rather than consuming too much in one night.”

According to [Safe Kids Worldwide](#), on average, children are more than twice as likely to be struck by a car on Halloween than on any other day of the year. To help kids stay safe during trick-or-treating, here are some tips for parents from the [National Safety Council](#) (NSC):

- Fasten reflective tape to children’s costumes and bags or give them glow sticks or a flashlight to carry.
- Accompany young children (12 and under) on their trick-or-treating rounds in the neighborhood.
- If your older children are going alone, plan and review a route acceptable to you and agree on a specific time they should return home.
- Instruct children to travel only in familiar, well-lit areas and stick with their friends.
- Teach your children never to enter a stranger's home or car.
- Children and adults alike should put electronic devices down, keep heads up and walk (not run) across the street only at corners or crosswalks.
- Tell your children not to eat any treats until they return home so that you can check the candy to make sure it is wrapped as well as to help avoid any food allergies.

Drivers who are out and about on Halloween night need to be cautious and watch for children walking on roadways, medians and curbs. Particularly, drivers should enter and exit driveways and alleys slowly and carefully and keep an eye out for children in dark clothing at twilight and later in the evening. The NSC also suggests that any new, inexperienced drivers should be discouraged from driving when trick-or-treating is occurring in the community.

For those staying home and handing out treats, the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (AAP) has the following tips to ensure a safe environment for trick-or-treaters:

- Remove tripping hazards to keep your home safe for visiting trick-or-treaters. Keep the porch and front yard clear of anything a child could trip over such as garden hoses, toys, bikes, and lawn decorations.
- Check outdoor lights and replace burned-out bulbs to ensure good visibility.
- Sweep wet leaves from sidewalks and steps to prevent anyone from slipping on them.
- Keep your pets in another room when you are expecting trick-or-treaters.

Finally, when it comes to the tradition of pumpkin carving, don’t allow small children to carve pumpkins with sharp utensils. Instead, they should draw a face with markers.

Candlelit pumpkins should be placed on a sturdy table, away from curtains and other flammable objects and they should never be left unattended. Do not place candlelit pumpkins or decorations on a porch or any path where visitors may pass close by. Another safer option is to use an electric candle, flashlight or glow stick to light the pumpkin.

By following these tips, you can help ensure your family has a safe and Happy Halloween. For more information, visit [nsc.org/halloween](https://nsc.org/halloween).

For more information about HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital, visit [steliz.org](https://steliz.org).