

## **GHOSTLY TIPS FOR SAFE TRICKS OR TREATS**

By Dr. Birute Wise

Halloween is a great time of year, full of spooks, trick-or-treating, and ghoulish fun. However, it can pose certain dangers for young trick-or-treaters. Here's a helpful list to keep this Halloween safe for everyone.

### Trick or Treaters

Always go with an adult, or in a group if you're an older teenager.

Going out during daylight hours is the safest – less chance of running into a vampire.

Always use a flashlight after dark – it wards off ghostly spirits and helps people in cars see you better.

Walk, fly, or slither; don't run.

Stay in familiar neighborhoods and visit only familiar houses – they give better treats, anyway.

Go only to houses that have a light on – the others may be haunted.

Stay on the sidewalks and don't hide or hop out into the street from between parked cars.

Look both ways before crossing the street, and cross only at corners - you don't want to get run over by any witches on broomsticks.

Don't go through back alleys and fields - they may be filled with scary goblins.

Stay in populated areas with good lighting – that way you can see everyone's costumes.

Stay away from strangers and don't go into anyone's home or car – even strangers that seem nice can be very spooky.

Stay away from animals you don't know – they may be werewolves.

### Parents

Always go with your younger child, or make sure your older teenager is going in a group with a responsible adult.

Plan a safe route with your older teenage children so you know where they plan to go, and set a time for them to return home.

Older teenagers should know how to reach you in an emergency, and should have change or a cellular phone available for such use.

Talk to your older teenagers about what is appropriate and what is harmful in regard to Halloween pranks.

Plan costumes that are bright and reflective. Consider adding reflective tape or striping to costumes or bags for greater visibility.

Make sure that shoes fit well and that costumes are short enough to prevent tripping, getting tangled, or coming in contact with flames.

Make sure your child's costume has good peripheral vision if it involves a mask or head covering.

Make sure store-bought costumes are made of flame-retardant material.

Place emergency identification (name, address, phone number) inside Halloween costumes or on a bracelet your child is wearing.

Think twice before using simulated knives, guns, or swords. If you do, make sure they are not too realistic, and that they are soft and flexible enough to prevent injury.

Feed your children a good spooky Halloween dinner before going trick-or-treating. Tell your children to bring home the candy before they eat it; look at the wrappings closely and discard anything that looks suspicious.

Take the time to eliminate tripping hazards on your porch or walkway. Make sure that if you use candles in your outdoor decorations, they are placed away from the walkways.

### Spooky Alternatives to Trick-or-Treating

Find a party or organize one yourself with your friends – organizing a haunted house is great fun for kids of all ages (and adults, too)!

Community centers, shopping malls, and religious organizations may have festivities already planned.

Work with local groups to create a Halloween carnival, and get kids of all ages involved. Consider handing out small prizes or safe non-food treats instead of candy.

Have a great Halloween!

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