

Trick-or-treating safety tips from an ER doc

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Flashlights, reflective tape and large groups can help keep kids safe.

(HealthDay)—There's no trick to keeping children safe on Halloween; it just takes some basic precautions to make sure the evening is a treat, an expert says.

First, use a flashlight and put reflective tape on costumes and goody bags to help drivers see children as they go from house to house.

"It is vital and lifesaving to have reflective items on your costumes or a flashlight in hand," Dr. Sampson Davis, an emergency medicine physician at St. Michaels Medical Center in Newark, N.J., said in a center news release. "Help drivers spot you with ease. With dark colors of Halloween costumes and some accompanied by a mask, a driver may have difficulty seeing you."

Children should not trick-or-treat alone. They should walk in groups or with a trusted adult. Tell your children to be aware and alert at all times, and visit only well-lit homes.

"The reality is there are predators who use Halloween in particular as a day to disguise themselves when plotting an attack," Davis said.

"Safeguard your [children](#) by making sure they stick together in large groups and have an adult along to prevent an incident from unfolding. Never approach or get in a car with a stranger and never enter the home of a stranger."

Reduce the risk of eye injuries by not wearing decorative [contact lenses](#) and by ensuring that costume accessories are soft and pliable.

"I often treat patients in the emergency department with eye infections and injury from decorative contact lens," Davis said. "Either the lenses are kept in too long or shared among friends, or [they have] an allergen component—all leading to an increased risk of a bacterial infection and permanent eye damage."

Children should eat only factory-wrapped treats.

"Discard homemade treats and unwrapped goods," Davis said. "The risk isn't worth it, as one doesn't know the exact ingredients used in preparation. Prevent possible allergy exposure, bacteria and, lastly, poison by only allowing wrapped, sealed treats."

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers more [Halloween health and safety tips](#).

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