

Halloween can be a fright for kids with food allergies

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Expert offers tips for getting your ghosts and goblins safely through the holiday.

(HealthDay)—Parents of youngsters with food allergies may feel Halloween is more trick than treat, but the holiday's risks can be reduced with some simple precautions, an expert says.

"Every year Halloween is a bigger celebration. And every year, parents of kids with food allergies have to think about ways to keep their child safe from potential allergic reactions," allergist Dr. Janna Tuck said in an American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) news release.

"About 4 to 6 percent of [children](#) in the United States have a [food allergy](#). And while many kids are good at knowing what they're allergic to, sometimes there are hidden dangers kids and parents need to be aware of," she added.

One way to make Halloween safer for children with food allergies is to put the emphasis on spookiness rather than treats. There are many fun things to do that don't involve eating, such as watching scary movies, going to haunted houses or on treasure hunts, making masks, or carving pumpkins.

While you and your child may know which foods trigger an allergic reaction, some Halloween treats don't provide information about their ingredients and are not safe for children with food allergies. Let your kids know that mini-sized snacks may not carry the usual food allergy warnings. It's also important for parents to tell their children it's fine to say "No, thank you" to treats they know are not safe for them.

One thing parents of children with food allergies can do is drop off safe treats with neighbors before Halloween. And if you're worried that your youngster will be tempted to snack while trick-or-treating, make them a special treat sack to help them avoid the temptation of snacking before they get home.

A campaign to boost awareness of food allergies was launched last year by the nonprofit organization Food Allergy Research & Education. The group suggests buying inexpensive nonfood treats and placing a pumpkin painted teal—the color of food allergy awareness—in front of your house, so that [parents](#) and children with food allergies know that's a house that will offer them a safe, nonfood treat.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more about [food allergies](#).

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