

How to keep kids with food allergies safe during Halloween

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Halloween can be a particularly difficult time for kids with food allergies since many common candies contain one or more common allergens. The consequences can be dangerous and traumatic for kids

who accidentally consume something they're allergic to. But a growing movement to give kids with food allergies some non-food treat options is making things a little safer and easier.

There are monsters and masks, superheroes and surprises. But for some kids, it's the foods that can cause the fright—not the Halloween haunts.

"It's a very concerning time, indeed, for parents of children who have food allergies," says Dr. Arveen Bhasin, a Mayo Clinic allergy specialist.

Dr. Bhasin says the nine most common food allergens include eggs, milk, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish and sesame. Some of those can be found in many popular Halloween candies.

And knowing which candies can have potential allergens can be tough.

"It's very important to remember that [for] fun-size candy bars, the ingredients in those are actually different than in the full-size candy bars," Dr. Bhasin says. "So it's critical for the parents to read the ingredients because what's safe in a full-size candy bar may not be safe in a fun-size candy bar." Full-size candy bars may be manufactured in different plants than fun-size bars, contributing to the different [ingredients](#) adds Dr. Bhasin.

But since 2014, the Teal Pumpkin Project has made it easier for parents to identify houses that have safe alternatives for trick-or-treaters with food allergies. If there's a teal pumpkin outside the [door](#), [kids](#) might find stickers, pencils or glow sticks as treats instead of candy.

So this Halloween, let the spiders and cemeteries do the scaring—not the sweets.

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