

*Nation's emergency physicians offer tips on avoiding trick-or-treat injuries.*

An estimated 40 million children between the ages of five and 14 could hit the trick-or-treat trails this Halloween according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The nation's emergency physicians want all of them to enjoy the holiday traditions safely and not experience any Halloween horrors that would include spending time in the emergency department.

"Children should be out having fun and spending time with family and friends," said Dr. Sandra Schneider, president of the American College of Emergency Physicians. "They should not have to spend Halloween in the ER because of some injury that could have been easily prevented."

The risk of a child being hit by a car is roughly four times higher on Halloween than any other night of the year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Other common Halloween injuries include eye injuries from sharp objects and burns from flammable costumes.

Emergency physicians recommend that children "trick-or-treat" at organized Halloween festivities, such as local churches, shopping malls or schools. This way children are not walking in the dark and it allows constant adult supervision.

In addition, ACEP suggests that adults following tips for a safe and fun Halloween:

- Make sure your child stays on the sidewalks as much as possible (off streets) and obeys all rules.
- Discuss the importance of staying together in a group. Require at least one adult to serve as chaperone during trick-or-treat gatherings.
- Make sure your child knows the potential dangers from strangers. Make sure they know never to accept rides from strangers or visit unfamiliar homes or areas.
- Avoid costumes that could cause children to trip, such as baggy pants, long hems, high heels and oversized shoes.
- Avoid costumes that obstruct the child's sight or vision.
- Avoid masks if possible. If your child must wear one, make sure it is well ventilated.
- Make sure costume fabric, wigs and beards area made of flame-resistant materials, such as nylon or polyester.
- Keep candlelit Jack-O-Lanterns away from children so they can't get burned or set on fire.
- Make sure costumes are visible at night: avoid dark colors. Add reflective tape to costumes so your child is more visible to motor vehicles.
- Make sure you see all of the candy before your child eats it. Avoid candy that is not wrapped in its original wrapper, as well as all fruit.
- Take a flashlight while trick-or-treating as visibility decreases long before it gets really dark.
- Check accessories such as swords, knives, wands and other pointed objects. Make sure they are made from flexible materials and have dulled edges.