



# Halloween Advice

This month we want to ensure that Halloween is a happy and safe time for everyone, whether young or old. Please read our advice on this briefing for advice on how to have an enjoyable and safe Halloween.

## Children and Young People at Halloween

Children always enjoy Halloween but it can be a worrying time for parents. Halloween should be a treat for everyone, so we have produced the following safety tips to help make sure your kids have fun safely!

### Dressing up safely

- Lots of children enjoy making turnip or pumpkin lanterns. If you are making these remember that lanterns should never be made from plastic bottles or other containers.
- Do not allow young children to carry lanterns containing lit candles, use LED ones as a safer option.
- Costumes should not be too long or restrict your child's freedom to move – you don't want any unplanned bumps in the night!
- Some masks can obstruct a child's vision, a potential danger, especially if they are crossing roads. Consider using face paints instead.
- If your kids are going to be outside then make sure they are wearing visible clothing – perhaps you could put reflective tape on their costumes.
- Some costumes – coupled with the excitement of Halloween – can encourage aggressive behaviour. Even fake knives, swords and other costume accessories can hurt or scare people. Make sure your kids understand this and that any potentially dangerous items are made of cardboard or other flexible materials.

### Dressing up - Fire hazard warning

Legislation hasn't changed, some children's Halloween costumes are still extremely dangerous. Children's halloween costumes are classed as toys which means they don't go through the same fire safety tests regular clothes do.

Halloween costumes and naked flames don't mix. If you do choose to wear a costume or let your a child wear a costume, look for it to be flame retardant and keep away from naked flames as much as possible.

Keep your little ones safe this Halloween avoid using naked flames such as candles, tea lights, bonfires or open fires. To reduce the risk of fire, use LED candles, torches or glow sticks just as spooky but much more safe.

A recent series of the BBC television program 'Watchdog' has shown that some costumes bought from supermarkets are extremely flammable despite passing current fire safety regulations. The episode includes a re-telling of the day Claudia Winkleman's 8 year old daughter's halloween costume caught fire.

## Top tips for young people at Halloween

- Always be accompanied by an adult when you are trick-or-treating.
- You should only go to houses of people that you know and who are happy for you to call.
- Stay safe, keep to places that you know and are well lit. Do not take short cuts through gardens, alleyways or parks.
- Watch out for traffic - drivers might not see you.
- If you are wearing a mask make sure that you can see where you are going and are aware of your surroundings.
- With the clocks going back, it will be dark by 5pm. Don't leave it too late to venture out and plan to be home within an hour.
- Make sure all children know not to go off on a solo mission. Let them know they must always stay with friends and their accompanying adult.
- Be safe and seen in the dark and take a torch.
- Carry a torch and a fully charged mobile phone (if you have one).

## Emergency procedures

### Stop, Drop and Roll

In an emergency where a person's clothing is on fire follow the procedure: Stop, Drop and Roll.

1. Stop the casualty panicking, running around or going outside; any movement or breeze will fan the flames.
2. Drop the casualty to the ground. If possible, wrap them tightly in a fire blanket, or heavy fabric such as a coat, curtain, blanket or rug.
3. Roll the casualty along the ground until the flames have been smothered. Treat any burns and help the casualty to lie down and start cooling the burn as soon as possible.

### Cool, Call and Cover

A good first aid response following a burn or scald can make an enormous difference in recovery time and the severity of scarring. Remember to use the following steps in situations where a burn occurs.

1. **COOL** the burn with running cold tap water for 20 minutes and remove all clothing and jewellery in the area (unless it has melted or firmly stuck to the wound).
2. **CALL** for help - 999, 111 or local GP for advice.
3. **COVER** with cling film or a sterile, non-fluffy dressing or cloth. Make sure the patient is kept warm.

## Having fun safely

The safest way for children to celebrate Halloween is by going to an organised party. Why not hold your own with bobbing for apples, doughnuts on strings and all the other fun and games of Halloween?

- Lots of children like to go trick-or-treating at Halloween. We recommend that they should always go out in groups and younger children should be accompanied by an adult.
- Older children should agree with parents or guardians in advance exactly where they are going and if possible which houses they intend to visit.
- It is likely to be dark outside – make sure they have torches and only walk down well-lit streets.
- If your children have a mobile phone make sure they take it with them and check in at regular intervals to let you know all is well. Agree in advance a time when they will be back home and make sure one of them has a watch.
- Make sure your kids know not to enter anyone's house and not to accept lifts in people's cars.
- Talk through the idea of trick or treat, and make sure your children are aware that some people do not want to be visited on Halloween.

## Safe Treats

- Ask your kids not to eat any sweets or other goodies that they have been given until they get home. Giving them a meal or snack before they go might help them resist temptation!
- Carefully check all the things your kids have been given. Sweets and food that are still in their original wrappers are safest.