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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN BAY COUNTY ENCOURAGES HALLOWEEN SAFETY

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PANAMA CITY, Fla.— The Florida Department of Health is providing information for residents to make the best decisions about their health and safety while enjoying Halloween.

If trick-or-treating is allowed in your community, the Department has tips to ensure a safe and healthy Halloween.

- **Plan costumes that are bright and reflective.** Consider adding reflective tape or striping to costumes and trick-or-treat bags for greater visibility.
- **Make sure that shoes fit well** and that costumes are short enough to prevent tripping, entanglement or contact with flame.
- **Look for "flame resistant" on the costume labels.** Wigs and accessories should also clearly indicate this.
- **Avoid any sharp or long swords, canes, or sticks as a costume accessory.** Your child can easily be hurt by these accessories if he or she stumbles or trips.
- **Do not use decorative contact lenses without an eye examination and a prescription from an eye care professional.** While the packaging on decorative lenses will often make claims such as "*one size fits all,*" or "*no need to see an eye specialist,*" obtaining decorative contact lenses without a prescription is both dangerous and illegal. This can cause pain, inflammation, and serious eye disorders and infections, which may lead to permanent vision loss.

For those unable to go trick-or-treating, there are still plenty of activities to enjoy the holiday

- **Carving or decorating pumpkins with family members and displaying them.** Children can draw a face with markers and parents can do the cutting. Consider using a flashlight or glow stick instead of a candle to light your pumpkin. If you do use a candle, a votive candle is safest. Do not place candlelit pumpkins on a porch or any path where visitors may pass close by.
- **Doing a Halloween scavenger hunt where children are given lists of Halloween-themed things to look for while they walk outdoors from house to house admiring Halloween decorations.**

- **Visiting pumpkin patches or orchards where people use hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples.**
- **Attend a small, outdoor and open-air costume parade or have a virtual costume contest**

If you plan to stay home this year and hand out goodies to neighborhood children, the Department advises these tips:

- **Remove tripping hazards to keep your home safe for trick-or-treaters.**
Keep the porch and front yard clear of anything a child could trip over such as garden hoses, toys, bikes and lawn decorations.
- **Check outdoor lights and replace burned-out bulbs.**
- **Sweep wet leaves from sidewalks and steps.**
- **Provide grab and go goodie bags instead of individual pieces of candy.**
If you are preparing goodie bags, [wash your hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after preparing the bags.

Parents are encouraged to give their child a good meal prior to parties and trick-or-treating to prevent overindulgence on candy. Keep an eye on what your child has in his or her mouth while trick or treating.

Additional resources for a safe and healthy Halloween can be found on the websites for the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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