

HALLOWEEN SAFETY



During the Halloween season, the Blue Ridge Poison Center at the UVA Health System experiences a boost in calls from people worried about exposures to poisoned candy, make-up, glow-in-the-dark substances, and dry ice. Take note of these **Halloween safety tips from experts at the Blue Ridge Poison Center**, and enjoy toxic-free trick-or-treating!



CANDY

Tampering is rare, but use common sense to insure safe treats.

- Parents should accompany young children, and should only allow trick-or-treating at familiar homes.
- Serve dinner before leaving home to discourage snacking.
- Insist that children bring all candy home for you to inspect before eating. If you think they might nibble on the way, give them a separate sack of candy to take along.
- Throw out any unwrapped, re-wrapped, or suspicious candy. Throw out any homemade treats that did not come from trusted, familiar sources.
- Wash fruit, inspect for holes where a foreign object could have been inserted, and cut into pieces.
- Hard pieces of candy, gum, and peanuts are choking hazards for young children.
- Keep candy away from pets. Chocolate can be toxic to dogs!

GLOW-IN-THE-DARK SUBSTANCES

Glo-Sticks (also called 'light sticks') and other luminescent (glow-in-the-dark) paints and products are very low in toxicity. Generally these chemicals only cause mild, if any, problems. However, they may be irritating to the skin or the eyes on contact, and swallowing the liquid inside a glo-stick may cause some nausea or vomiting.

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MAKE-UP

Wearing make-up is safer than wearing a mask, because it does not obstruct the eyes. Cosmetics, face paints, and theatrical makeup must be approved for use by the Food and Drug Administration: check the label. Follow instructions carefully! Products that are approved for use on fingernails or hair may not be safe to use on your skin.

Products that are safe for most of your skin may not be safe to use near your eyes.

Never decorate your skin or hair with any paints, dyes, or other products not approved by the FDA for that purpose!

DRY ICE

Dry ice is frozen carbon dioxide. It is very cold: around minus109°F! Dry ice does not melt, it changes directly into a gas, producing a spooky smoky effect. Dry ice is not toxic and it is safe to drink beverages that have been chilled with it. But touching it can cause thermal burns. Also, breathing air with a high concentration of carbon dioxide can starve the body of oxygen.

- Use tongs or insulated gloves to handle dry ice.
- If someone touches or swallows dry ice, seek medical help immediately.
- Never use dry ice in an unventilated room or car. If you start to pant or have difficulty breathing, seek fresh air immediately.
- Carbon dioxide will sink and “pool” in low places, which could be dangerous to pets, small children, or people laying or sitting near the floor.



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The Blue Ridge Poison Center experts are standing by 24 hours a day, on Halloween and all other days of the year. Call for free, confidential advice or information on poisons and poison safety: 1-800-222-1222.