

# News Release

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## **Health department advises to have fun, but be safe during Halloween**

There is a fine line between fun and safety concerns when it comes to Halloween. “Everyone wants to have fun, yet we want everyone to be safe,” said Pam Palm, director of planning, education and promotion for the Knox County Health Department. “Despite all the fun with costumes and candy, Halloween can be a dangerous time for children.”

**According to the National Safety Council**, children are more than twice as likely to be hit by a car and killed on Halloween than on any other day of the year. Most Halloween related deaths occur at road crossings or intersections. “The lack of visibility due to low lighting at nighttime obviously plays a factor in many of these deaths,” said Palm.

To keep your Halloween safe and full of fun and treats, the planning, education and promotion staff at the health department recommend the following tips:

**When it comes to costumes**, regardless of whether it’s a homemade costume or one you purchase, your child should be able to see as well as be seen. Make sure that the mask fits well so that your children can see where they are going. And make sure that your child can be seen. Use reflective tape on costumes or trick or treat bags and carry a flash light or a glow stick. It’s also important to make sure that your child can move about freely. A costume that is too long or too bulky can cause problems when moving and may lead to dangerous falls.

**When they are out and about on Halloween**, a responsible adult should accompany young children. If your older children are going without you, make sure you know where they are going and always encourage the buddy system. Agree on a specific time when they should return home.

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Teach your children never to enter a stranger's home or car. Also, tell your children not to eat any treats until they return home and you can check the bag to avoid any unwanted surprises.

Stay on the sidewalks and avoid going through people's yards. Uneven spots in the lawn or low-lying plants can cause unexpected falls which could lead to injury.

It's okay to carry a cell phone, especially for emergencies and to take photos of all the cute, cool costumes. But children and adults are reminded to put their phones away when walking - keep your head up so you can pay attention to where you are going. As always, be extra careful crossing the street - walk, don't run.

**If you are handing out treats**, make sure the distribution point is easily accessible and well-lighted. Check outdoor lights and replace burned-out bulbs. Remove from the porch and front yard anything a child could trip over such as garden hoses, toys, lawn decorations and wet leaves. Be sure to restrain your pet so they do not jump on or bite a trick-or-treater - or run away if scared by someone in costume.

**If you happen to be driving on Halloween night**, watch for children walking on roadways, medians and curbs. Enter and exit driveways and alleys with caution and be extra careful backing up. At dusk and later in the evening, children in dark clothing are especially hard to see. If you have a new driver in your household, Halloween is not the time to be on the streets practicing your driving skills.

**Many restaurants and bars host parties and events on Halloween.** If you are in attendance at one of these events, please refrain from drinking alcohol if you are driving or have a designated driver. The threat of being in an accident or the complications of getting arrested for driving under the influence will definitely make Halloween a haunted experience.

Speaking of events and safety, the Committee for Public Health will be distributing glow sticks at the Hocus Pocus event at Ariel Foundation Park on Oct. 27 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. The committee is promoting a glow run and family event planned for September next year.

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