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Illinois' Poison Center Offers Safety 'Tricks' to Prevent Poisoning This Halloween

IPC Offers Important Guidance for Parents to Keep Children Safe

CHICAGO – Parents and caregivers need to beware of more than just ghosts and goblins this Halloween. According to the Illinois Poison Center (IPC), accidental poisonings from Halloween candy is rare, but IPC manages cases each year involving dry ice, glow sticks, and more.

“It is very rare to get poisoned from Halloween candy, but parents should still check their child’s candy as a safety precaution, especially with the recent increase in the use of candy-like products that contain THC or fentanyl,” said IPC Medical Director, Michael Wahl, MD. “While IPC doesn’t typically see poison incidents involving candy during this time of year, we do get calls about glow sticks, dry ice, and other potentially harmful items children eat.”

Make sure Halloween is scary for the right reasons by following these safety tips from the IPC.

Candy:

- Inspect your child’s candy after trick-or-treating.
- Discard candy with torn packages, holes, or opened wrapping.
- Discard expired items or anything that might seem questionable.
- Check candy labels to ensure your child isn’t allergic to any of the ingredients.
- Do not allow the child to eat any home-baked goods he or she may have received.
- For small children, remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies, or small toys.

Celebrations:

- Remind children not to chew on or break open glow sticks or any other glow-in-the-dark products.
- If a glow stick substance comes into contact with the skin or the mouth, wash it off immediately.
- If a glow stick substance gets into the eye, or if more than mild skin/oral irritation occurs, call the IPC right away for treatment recommendations.

- Keep alcohol away from children, and make sure opened containers and unfinished beverages stay out of reach.

Dry Ice:

- Make sure to wear protective clothing, such as appropriate gloves when handling dry ice, as skin exposure can cause significant damage, as can ingestion.
- Since dry ice can cause burns similar to frostbite, do not place any directly in a punch bowl or drinking cups.
- Call the IPC for help if a skin burn from dry ice is suspected.
- Do not use dry ice in an unventilated area, as carbon dioxide gas is produced. Be sure to store it in an insulated container, not in the freezer.

Costumes and cosmetics:

- Use face paint or makeup labelled as non-toxic, and avoid products that contain talc or hydrocarbons, which can be dangerous if accidentally ingested by young children.
- Test makeup on a small area of skin first, preferably the arm, to check for sensitivity to any ingredients before applying it to the face.
- Remove makeup before bedtime to prevent skin and eye irritation.
- Throw out any makeup that has expired or has a bad smell, as this could be a sign of bacterial contamination.
- Do not use products on the face or body that aren't intended for skin.

For more Halloween safety information from the IPC, [click here](#).

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The Illinois Poison Center is a nonprofit health service that provides the people of Illinois with comprehensive and trusted information and treatment advice on potentially harmful substances via a free, confidential 24-hour helpline (1-800-222-1222) staffed by specially trained physicians, nurses and pharmacists.