Blue Sky Pediatrics Asheville

Making every Child's day brighter by.......   **Newsletter**

giving you Halloween safety tips

Remember the excitement and thrill of Halloween when you were a child getting all dressed in your costume to go trick-or-treating? The following are some safety tips to keep it fun and safe for your kids this year.

Costume Safety

Make sure that the costume your child wears is made of flame retardant material. The costume should also be short enough so your child doesn't trip and fall. If the costume is a dark color, add some reflective tape to the costume or bag that your child will carry. If he wears a mask, make sure that it fits securely and doesn't hinder visibility. Consider face paint instead of a mask so your child isn't distracted by adjusting the mask and not watching for traffic. If you use face paint, make sure it is nontoxic and hypoallergenic. If any costume props are used, such as knives & swords, make sure they are flexible in case your child falls on them. Pointy props are also not a good idea as they could cause injury to your child or other children.

Trick-or-Treating Safety

If you choose to let your child go trick-or-treating, make sure they are supervised by an adult. Older children should trick-or-treat in groups in well-known neighborhoods. Designate a route that your child should follow and stress the importance of sticking to it. Have your child carry a flashlight for better visibility and to look for obstacles that could make him stumble or fall. Advise your child to not take shortcuts through alleys or parking lots and to stick to well-lit houses in familiar neighborhoods. Make sure your child knows to never go inside the house, no matter what age he is. Tell your kids to never accept a ride or go anywhere with a stranger. Remind your child that he will still need to follow traffic signals and the rules of the road. Visibility is harder for the drivers and the trick-or-treaters when it is dark outside.

Candy Safety

Check all of your child's candy before allowing him to eat any of it. You should inspect it for any source of tampering. Throw out any candy or treats that are homemade, unwrapped or if they appear to have been tampered with unless you specifically know and trust the person that gave the treat to your child. If your child is young, remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies or small toys. Wash all fresh fruit, inspect it for tampering (small holes), and cut it open before allowing your child to eat it.

Parent Pointers

As a parent, there are things you can do to make Halloween more safe for the kids that visit your home. You should prepare your home by removing any obstacles from the yard, restraining dogs and other animals, and lighting your house well. Don't assume the kids that visit your home will stay on the sidewalks. Do not use real candles with a flame that can pose a fire hazard or be knocked over. Provide treats that are individually wrapped or offer nonfood treats. Consider giving treats that are healthier. Some suggestions are: cheese and cracker packages, sugar-free gum, individual small bags of pretzels, small packages of nuts or raisins, fruit roll-ups, and granola bars. Some non-food suggestions are cool stickers or temporary tattoos, crayons, pencils, fun-shaped erasers, whistles, rubber spiders, activity books, and plastic rings. Your local dollar store should have most of these items this time of year as reasonable prices. Make sure that you allow enough time to feed your child before going out trick-or-treating. This will make the adventure better for you and your child and limit the urge to eat the candy before it can be inspected.

The following is a recipe for homemade Halloween face paint. It is not edible but will not cause a health risk if it ends up in your child's mouth.

1 tsp cornstarch, 1/2 tsp water, 1/2 tsp cold cream, 2 drops food coloring

In a small mixing bowl, combine all ingredients, mix well. Place in refrigerator for two hours and apply to dry face. Let set at least 20 minutes before going outdoors.