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Illinois' Poison Center Offers 'Tricks' to Keep Everyone Safe this Halloween

IPC Reminds Parents of Potential Halloween Poison Hazards

CHICAGO – Candy, costumes, and spooky decorations are part of the fun of Halloween, but the Illinois Poison Center (IPC) wants to remind parents and caregivers to be cautious and stay vigilant while celebrating.

IPC says accidental poisonings from Halloween candy are rare, but IPC manages cases each year involving dry ice, glow sticks, and cosmetics. In 2023, IPC managed 1,809 exposures to cosmetics, 289 exposures to glow sticks and 11 exposures to dry ice. Most calls related to the exposure of cosmetics and glow sticks were children 5 and under, and most exposures to dry ice were adults.

“IPC rarely manages calls about Halloween candy, but still recommend parents and caregivers check their child’s candy as a safety precaution, especially with the use of candy-like products that contain THC,” said IPC Medical Director, Michael Wahl, MD. “Each year, IPC receives calls about internal and external exposures to glow sticks, dry ice, and Halloween makeup.”

IPC encourages everyone follow these Halloween safety tips:

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.