



**For Immediate Release
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Dangers Lurk During Halloween Festivities

Illinois Poison Center offers tips for safe trick-or-treating

(Chicago) – Each Halloween, the Illinois Poison Center (IPC) receives hundreds of telephone calls regarding suspicious candy, dry ice, the ingestion of the liquid inside glow necklaces and much more.

“Despite yearly warnings, the poison center still receives numerous calls about Halloween hazards,” explains Dr. Michael Wahl, managing medical director, IPC. “It is clear that we must continue to remind parents of the dangers surrounding Halloween festivities.”

Halloween Favorites: Candy, Dry Ice and More

For decades, parents have been urged to inspect candy collected along the trick-or-treat route for safety. IPC reminds parents to check all candy wrappers for puncture holes – a sign that someone may have tampered with the candy – and discard all punctured, unwrapped or partially wrapped candy.

Dry ice is often a decorating tool that creates a “fog” effect. It is safe to use in punch bowls, but not in individual glasses. If swallowed, dry ice can burn the mouth and throat. Direct contact with the skin can cause a frostbite-type injury, which may result in the discoloration of the skin, along with burning and/or tingling sensations, numbness, and possibly severe pain. Wash the affected area immediately with water if skin contact occurs.

Glow sticks and necklaces are other popular Halloween items and help make children visible at night. In small amounts, the glowing liquid inside will not cause severe poisoning. If punctured or chewed on, however, the plastic tubes may leak and may cause skin irritation and a rash, irritation to the eyes; if ingested, it may cause nausea and burning. Parents should call the poison center for first aid treatment recommendations.

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Add One/Halloween Dangers

The IPC also offers these safety tips and poison prevention recommendations:

- Call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 with questions regarding all Halloween poisoning concerns. If you suspect a poisoning, call the IPC immediately; do not wait for symptoms to appear.
- Trick or treat with small children.
- Check all treats for puncture holes, a sign that something may have been injected into the treat.
- Feed children before taking them out to reduce the urge to snack on the route.
- Bring your own candy to give children along the way so they will not be tempted to eat from their bags.
- Throw away all unwrapped candy.
- Allow your child to eat homemade treats only from someone you know and trust. Most treat makers have good intentions, but it's not worth the risk.
- Purchase non-toxic face paint or makeup for a safe alternative to masks. Other products may contain laxatives, talc or hydrocarbons, which can be toxic.

The IPC's Halloween Safety brochure includes many more helpful tips to stay safe this trick-or-treating season. For a free copy of the brochure and other IPC educational materials, visit the IPC's Web site at www.IllinoisPoisonCenter.org to download copies or contact the IPC at 1-800-222-1222.

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The IPC is the only certified, regional poison center in Illinois, serving more than 12 million residents in 102 counties – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – via a national, toll-free number, 1-800-222-1222.

Calling the toll-free hot line will connect callers with their designated local poison center at any time from anywhere in the United States; all calls placed in Illinois are routed to the IPC. Staffed by pharmacists, physicians, nurses and poison information providers, the IPC provides poison prevention information and treatment advice to the public and health care professionals on alcohol and drug misuse, medication problems, bites and stings, occupational accidents and other poisonings.

The IPC is a program of the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council, an association of more than 140 hospitals and health care organizations working together to improve the quality of health care services in the Chicago area.

Editor's Note: Illinois Poison Center experts are available for media interviews. Please contact Robin Antognoli at 312-906-6146 or rantogno@ilpoison.org to schedule an interview.