

## Avoid Frightening Injuries this Halloween

Written by Australian Business

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ROSEMONT, Ill., Sept. 17, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The ghosts and goblins may be coming out this Halloween, but your skeleton shouldn't! As millions of Americans prepare for the traditions of Halloween - pumpkin carving, trick-or-treating and home decorating - the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) and the Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America (POSNA) urge celebrants of all ages to put safety first.

"The most common Halloween injuries we see are severe hand injuries from pumpkin carving and leg and extremity injuries due to falls from long costumes and/or costumes that impair vision," said orthopaedic surgeon and AAOS spokesperson Kevin G. Shea, MD. "It's a scary thing when individuals are ill equipped with safety rules such as wearing dark costumes without reflectors, or using the wrong tools to carve a pumpkin. By familiarizing yourself with safety tips, you decrease your chances for injuries."

A study published in the 2010 journal *Pediatrics* found that Halloween is the holiday with the fourth highest number of emergency room visits. Other results from the nine-year study on injuries between 1997 and 2006 included:

- Finger/hand injuries accounted for the greatest proportion of injuries on Halloween (17.6 percent)
- Of the finger/hand injuries sustained on Halloween, 33.3 percent were lacerations and 20.1 percent were fractures
- Children, ages 10-14, sustained the greatest proportion of injuries (30.3 percent)

To help reduce the risk for injury on Halloween, the AAOS and POSNA offer the following safety tips:

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### Trick-or-treat

- Walk on sidewalks and never cut across yards or driveways. Obey all traffic signals and remain in designated crosswalks when crossing the street.
- Costumes should be flame-resistant and fit properly. The child's vision should be unobstructed by masks, face paint or hats. Costumes that are too long may cause kids to trip and fall, so trim or hem them as necessary.
- Wear sturdy, comfortable, slip-resistant shoes to avoid falls.
- Trick-or-treaters should only approach houses that are well lit. Both children and parents should carry flashlights to see and be seen.
- Be aware of neighborhood dogs when trick-or-treating. Remember that these pets can pose a threat when you approach their home.
- Avoid candles in Halloween decorations. Instead, use non-flammable light sources, like glow sticks or artificial pumpkin lights.
- Carry a cell phone while trick-or-treating in case of an emergency.

### Pumpkin carving

- Use a pumpkin carving kit, or knives specifically designed for carving. These are less likely to get stuck in the thick pumpkin skin.
- Children should not carve pumpkins unless supervised closely by an adult. Some Halloween carving devices, designed especially for children, may be safe for use with parental supervision. Younger children can use paint, markers or other non-carving decoration kits. Always carve pumpkins in a clean, dry and well-lit area, and make sure there is no moisture on the carving tools or your hands.
- Beware of sharp carving tools! If you are cut, apply pressure with a clean cloth and elevate the area above the heart. If bleeding does not stop within 10-15 minutes or if the cut is deep, evaluation by a physician might be needed. Make sure cuts are cleaned and dressed with clean bandages.

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