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Happy and SAFE Halloween by Mary Pulido Ph.D

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Here are the tips that The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC) believes will keep children safe on October 31st!

Costumes – They must be flame retardant and have them end above the ankles. Skip the masks, go for face paint, skip floppy shoes, go for sneakers, skip anything sharp or pointed. Put reflective tape on the costumes so cars can see your children (and so you can keep track of them!)

Plan the route: Pick the apartments or houses that your child will visit before they leave your home. Make sure that they do not go to homes that are not lit up or look welcoming. In my co-op, signs are given out to put on the doors that say “Trick or Treaters are Welcome Here” – a very good idea! A parent or teenage sibling should accompany all children.

Ring the doorbell –Ring the bell and STEP BACK. Let the person handing out the treats come to you. NEVER go inside a home where you don’t know the person. If there are pets in the home, do not try to pet them, you don’t know them and they don’t know you. And, if you are handing out the candy, make sure it’s children at your door, as you don’t want a perpetrator to gain access to you and your home.

Traveling to the next house – Sadly, many children are injured or die on Halloween, due to cars hitting them at intersections, while the car is making a left hand turn. Teach children to cross at the cross walks and to never run out from between parked cars. No iPhones, iPods or any other distraction allowed.

Inspect the Candy – Although tempting, it’s best not to eat any treats until the parents have a chance to inspect them. Feed your child a good meal before they go out, so they don’t nibble. Discard anything whereby the package is torn.

Prepare for the Unexpected. Carry a cell phone and a flashlight. Write your child's name and phone number on a name tag and put it on their costume in case they get lost. Carry an epi-pen if your child has allergies. And, have a conversation with your child about all these issues so they have a very HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

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