

'Lucky 13'



Tips for a Safe Halloween



Whether you're goblin or ghoul, vampire or witch, poor costume choices—including decorative contact lenses and flammable costumes—and face paint allergies can haunt you long after Halloween if they cause injury.

Enjoy a safe and happy Halloween by following the "lucky 13" guidelines from FDA, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

1. Wear costumes made of fire-retardant materials ([www.cpsc.gov/en/newsroom/news-releases/2010/cpsc-warns-dont-be-haunted-by-burn-and-](http://www.cpsc.gov/en/newsroom/news-releases/2010/cpsc-warns-dont-be-haunted-by-burn-and-laceration-hazards-this-halloween/)

[laceration-hazards-this-halloween/](http://www.cpsc.gov/en/newsroom/news-releases/2010/cpsc-warns-dont-be-haunted-by-burn-and-laceration-hazards-this-halloween/)); look for "flame resistant" on the label. If you make your costume, use flame-resistant fabrics such as polyester or nylon.

2. Wear bright, reflective costumes or add strips of reflective tape so you'll be more visible; make sure the costumes aren't so long that you're in danger of tripping.

If you have never worn contact lenses before, Halloween should not be the first time you wear them.

3. Wear makeup and hats rather than masks that can obscure your vision.
4. Test the makeup you plan to use by putting a small amount on the arm of the person who will be wearing it a couple of days in advance. If a rash, redness, swelling, or other signs of irritation develop where the makeup was applied, that's a sign of a possible allergy.
5. Check FDA's list of color additives (www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/Labeling/IngredientNames/ucm109084.htm) to see if makeup additives are FDA approved. If they aren't approved for their intended use, don't use it.
6. Don't wear decorative contact lenses unless you have seen an eye care professional and gotten a proper lens fitting and instructions for using the lenses.

Safe Treats

Eating sweet treats is also a big part of the fun on Halloween. If you're trick-or-treating, health and safety experts say you should remember these tips:

7. Don't eat candy until it has been inspected at home.
8. Trick-or-treaters should eat a snack before heading out, so they won't be tempted to nibble on treats that haven't been inspected.
9. Tell children not to accept—or eat—anything that isn't commercially wrapped.
10. Parents of very young children should remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies, or small toys.
11. Inspect commercially wrapped treats for signs of tampering, such as an unusual appearance or discoloration, tiny pinholes, or tears in wrappers. Throw away anything that looks suspicious.

For partygoers and party throwers, FDA recommends the following tips for two seasonal favorites:

12. Look for the warning label to avoid juice that hasn't been pasteurized or otherwise processed, especially packaged juice products that may have been made on site. When in doubt, ask! Always ask if you are unsure if a juice product is pasteurized or not. Normally, the juice found in your grocer's frozen food case, refrigerated section, or on the shelf in boxes, bottles, or cans is pasteurized.
13. Before bobbing for apples—a favorite Halloween game—reduce the amount of bacteria that might be on apples by thoroughly rinsing them under cool running water. As an added precaution, use a produce brush to remove surface dirt.


Eye Safety

FDA joins eye care professionals—including the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, the Contact Lens Association of Ophthalmologists and the American Optometric Association—in discouraging consumers from using illegal decorative (colored) contact lenses (www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm275069.htm). These are contact lenses that have not been approved by FDA for safety and effectiveness. Consumers should only use brand name contact lenses from well-known contact lens companies.


If you have never worn contact lenses before, Halloween should not be the first time you wear them. Experts warn that buying any kind of contact lenses—which are medical devices and regulated as such—without an examination and a prescription from an eye care profes-

sional can cause serious eye disorders and infections, which may lead to permanent vision loss. Despite the fact that it's illegal to sell decorative contact lenses without a valid prescription, FDA says the lenses are sold on the Internet and in retail shops and salons—particularly around Halloween.

The decorative lenses make the wearer's eyes appear to glow in the dark, create the illusion of vertical "cat eyes," or change the wearer's eye color.

"Although unauthorized use of decorative contact lenses is a concern year-round, Halloween is the time when people may be inclined to use them, perhaps as costume accessories," says FDA eye expert Bernard Lepri, O.D., M.S., M.Ed.. "What troubles us is when they are bought and used without a valid prescription, without the involvement of a qualified eye care professional, or without appropriate follow-up care. This can lead to significant risks of eye injuries, including blindness." 

Find this and other Consumer Updates at www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates

 Sign up for free e-mail subscriptions at www.fda.gov/consumer/consumerenews.html