

For Immediate Release  
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## **Make Safety a Priority This Halloween**

With Halloween just around the corner, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is reminding families across the region to keep safety top of mind while enjoying the fun and festivities. Whether trick-or-treating, attending events, or handing out candy, a few simple precautions can help everyone have a safe and healthy holiday.

“Halloween should be a time of fun, not fear,” says Kay Schmidt, Emergency Response Coordinator, at SWNPHD. “By planning ahead and making safety a priority, parents and children can enjoy the excitement without unnecessary risks.”

To ensure a safe and enjoyable Halloween, it’s important to prioritize visibility and awareness. Children should carry glow sticks or flashlights and wear costumes with reflective tape so drivers can easily see them. Stick to sidewalks and crosswalks and stay alert by keeping phones put away while walking.

Costume safety also plays a big role. Costumes should fit properly to prevent trips and falls, and flame-resistant materials are recommended. Whenever possible, choose non-toxic makeup over masks, as masks can limit a child’s vision and increase the risk of accidents.

When it comes to treats, safety starts before eating. All candy should be inspected for tampering or choking hazards, and children should avoid consuming homemade treats from strangers. Encourage a healthy start to the evening with a nutritious meal to help limit excessive snacking later. In the days that follow, balance candy with healthier snack options.

Weather conditions can change quickly in the fall, so check the forecast and dress children appropriately. Layering under costumes is a good way to stay warm without reducing visibility. Lastly, keep pets indoors and away from the front door during trick-or-treating hours to avoid stress or sudden reactions to visitors in costumes.

SWNPHD also encourages local organizations and communities to consider safe alternatives such as trunk-or-treat events, community center activities, or school-sponsored Halloween parties that are well-lit and supervised.

For more information call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov) contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

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