

## Health Notes



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**F**all has arrived, parents! And with the fall festivities, there are many temptations and goodies to be had with the approaching holidays of Halloween and Thanksgiving. Take some time today and learn about having a healthy holiday season and the do's and don'ts of celebrating safely and healthily.

### Treats for Special Diets

Food allergies can put a damper on any kid's fun, especially during Halloween. Parents, be sure you examine the label of all candies to ensure your child's allergen isn't present and don't allow any home-baked goods to be eaten.<sup>1</sup> If you want to speed up the process, as many kids have a tough time with patience on Halloween, visit [davita-medicalgroup.com/co/allergy-friendly-halloween-candy](http://davita-medicalgroup.com/co/allergy-friendly-halloween-candy) beforehand and provide a list to your child to have as a reference when they are picking out goodies.

Another good idea is known as the "Teal Pumpkin Project" created by the Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) organization which promotes the inclusion of children who have food allergies or other health conditions. Houses that have a teal pumpkin out front will usually have allergy-friendly candy or foods as well as non-edible treats like small toys, glow sticks, or stickers.<sup>2</sup>

Keeping a watchful eye on your kids while they enjoy their loot is important as food allergies can develop at any stage of life.<sup>3</sup> Every three minutes, a food allergy reaction sends someone to the emergency room in the U.S. and no parents need that type of scare on Halloween.<sup>4</sup> A child having an allergic reaction may manifest symptoms of putting their hands in their mouth, pulling or scratching at their tongues, slur their words, or their voice may become hoarse or squeaky.<sup>5</sup> Other symptoms you may see are skin changes such as a rash and swelling with possible itching, runny nose, congestion, abnormal breathing sounds (such as wheezing, stridor or cough), increased work of breathing, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, feeling dizzy or passing out.

### Tricks on Keeping Them Healthy

The spookiest holiday of the year is a good marker for the start of flu season as well! Colorado Springs can have anywhere from a mild summer night to a blustery winter snowstorm on Halloween. We've seen it all and many kids can contract a cold from their night of fun and trickery. Getting a flu shot two weeks before mischief night can help keep your child happy and healthy past Halloween and into the family holiday season.<sup>6</sup>

It is also a great time to remind your child of proper hygiene as they travel door to door speaking to neighbors to get treats and possibly petting friendly dogs being escorted by adults on the street. Remind them that washing their hands before eating their treats or touching their face is important.<sup>6</sup> For parents with children entering adolescence, it is important to speak to them about washing their monster face make-up off prior to going to bed.

## Make it a Happy Halloween by Keeping Your Kids Safe and Healthy

With the increase in sugar intake in your child's diet, it is also important to remind them to brush all their teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day and floss daily as well.<sup>7</sup>

Stay safe, healthy, and happy this Halloween and be sure to remain healthy throughout the rest of the holiday season by visiting your family provider to get you and your family's flu shots.

- 1 <https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/halloween-food-safety-tips-parents>
- 2 <https://vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/having-a-fun-safe-halloween-for-kids-with-food-allergies/>
- 3 <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/food-allergy/expert-answers/food-allergy/faq-20058483>
- 4 <https://www.foodallergy.org/life-with-food-allergies/food-allergy-101/symptoms-of-an-allergic-reaction-to-food>
- 5 <https://www.foodallergy.org/life-with-food-allergies/newly-diagnosed/how-a-child-might-describe-a-reaction>
- 6 <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/keyfacts.htm>
- 7 <https://www.cdc.gov/family/halloweenhealth/index.htm>

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