

## Staying Safe on Halloween

Halloween is a wonderful time to dress up, have fun, and fill your belly with way too much chocolate! Yet the ready availability of alcohol during Halloween celebrations can also be dangerous, contributing to sharp increases in alcohol-related traffic incidents. Below are some tips for enjoying a frightful holiday while making sure that your kids—and yourself—stay safe.

- **Be a responsible chaperone.** If you're accompanying the kids while they're out trick-or-treating, hold off on any recreational substance use until everyone returns home. Keeping track of where your kids are (and even *who* they are behind their costumes and masks) is difficult enough—why take anything that makes the task even harder?
- **Keep child-focused festivities substance-free.** This not only reduces the risk of underage use, but also models for children and young adults that grown-up fun doesn't depend on the presence of alcohol or marijuana.
- **Start a conversation.** While it's illegal to market directly to children, many alcohol ads during the Halloween season feature “spooky” images with underage appeal. Talk to your children about the messages these ads are delivering, and help them think critically about what they're seeing and hearing.
- **Make sure your cannabis edibles are safely stored away.** This is especially important at a time when your house is likely to be filled with candy, including many unfamiliar varieties. It's important that adult edibles don't inadvertently find their way into the mix.
- **Check your children's candy.** While the likelihood of encountering drug-infused candy is low, it's always a good idea to steer clear of goodies that are unwrapped.

If you're hosting a Halloween party for adult friends:

- **Provide appealing non-alcoholic alternatives.** You'll be surprised to see how many guests choose an enticing, alcohol-free “mocktail” when they have the option. Check out some spooky, non-alcoholic alternatives [here](#).
- **Always serve food.** Drinking on an empty stomach leads to a more rapid absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream. High-protein foods such as cheese and meat can slow this absorption down.
- **Don't avoid the tough conversations.** If you suspect that one of your guests has had too much to drink, don't be afraid to have a discrete conversation with them about how they plan to get home. Think safety, not judgement. If you're not comfortable with confrontation, find someone who is. Keep in mind that you will be liable if an intoxicated guest is involved in an accident after leaving your party.

- **Arrange transportation for any guests who seem impaired.** This year, the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) estimates that 41 million kids will be out trick or treating. That means keeping the roads safe is more important than ever. In urban areas, most guests are likely to have their own Uber or Lyft account. In rural areas, prepare a list of local taxi companies in advance to have ready should guests need to call one.