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HALLOWEEN IS NEXT WEEK: OKLAHOMA POISON CENTER REPORTS ON THE MOST COMMON HALLOWEEN RELATED CALLS TO THE POISON HELPLINE

OKLAHOMA CITY – Each year, poison centers across the country manage numerous exposures involving Halloween-related substances and products. Cosmetics, button batteries, marijuana edibles and glow sticks make up the majority of Halloween-related calls to the Poison Helpline.

Cosmetics may contain chemicals that can be irritating to the skin and should be tested on a small area of skin before applying to the entire face or body. Throw away paints and make up that smell bad or appear discolored as this could be a sign of bacterial contamination. Only use face paint labeled as non-toxic.

Button batteries can be found in many Halloween decorations, candles, and novelty items. Be sure the batteries are properly secured and out of reach of small children. If ingested call the poison center or go to the emergency department right away.

Keep marijuana edibles in child resistant packaging and stored up and away from children. Use a lock box or location that children cannot see or reach. Do not store marijuana edibles with other household food and Halloween candy. Marijuana edibles can make children very sick. Symptoms in children can include loss of coordination, being unable to “wake up”, and trouble breathing.

Glow stick products are very tempting for children to place in the mouth. In doing so, the child may bite into and puncture the product, allowing the liquid to leak out and be swallowed, or splash into the eye. “A mouthful of liquid from a glow stick is minimally toxic, causing only minor mouth, throat, or skin irritation. However, if glow stick liquid is squirted into the eyes, it can cause serious injury,” says Kristie Edelen, Managing Director of the Oklahoma Poison Center. If a glow stick substance contacts the skin or mouth, wash it off immediately. If glow stick liquid gets into the eyes, a full 15-minute irrigation is necessary to ensure the liquid is no longer in contact with the eye.

In review of our past Halloween related calls, the Oklahoma Poison Center staff remind everyone to keep the following precautions in mind while celebrating Halloween:

- Check all candy and treats for choking hazards.
- Make sure medicine and marijuana-containing edibles are not left out and within a child’s reach, as children may confuse them for candy.
- Be aware of small batteries in flashlights and decorations; if swallowed, they may be a choking hazard or cause other life-threatening issues for small children.
- Dry ice should be used with appropriate protective clothing, as skin exposure can cause severe burns.
- Do not store dry ice in the freezer or an unventilated area.
- The chemical dibutyl phthalate, found inside glow sticks, can be harmful if it comes in direct contact with the eyes.
- Use caution when applying Halloween makeup, as most contain dyes, oils and fragrances that could irritate the skin. Test makeup on a small area of skin first.

Call the Oklahoma Poison Center with any questions or concerns regarding potential hazards that arise during Halloween festivities, and do not forget to save the poison center's phone number, (800) 222-1222, in your phone.

Pharmacists and registered nurses at the poison center are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at (800) 222-1222. Please do not email the poison center or a member of the poison center staff, as poisoning emergencies are not handled through email. The Oklahoma Poison Center is a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy at the OU Health Sciences Center. For more information, visit OklahomaPoison.org.

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