

Staying Safe This Halloween and Bonfire Night

Halloween and Bonfire Night are exciting times of year for children and adults alike. Whether you're planning a spot of trick-or-treating, carving pumpkins, attending a fireworks display or enjoying a family bonfire, it's important to take a few simple precautions to keep everyone safe.

As the nights get darker and the celebrations begin, here are some helpful tips from your GP practice to help you and your family enjoy the festivities safely.

🎃 Halloween safety: Trick or treat!

Halloween is great fun, but a little extra care can help prevent accidents and keep children safe.

1. Check your treats

- Only eat sweets and chocolates that are individually wrapped and properly sealed.
- Avoid eating any loose, unwrapped or unsealed sweets, particularly those given by people you do not know.
- Check packaging for allergens and expiry dates, especially if your child has a food allergy.
- Parents should check children's treats before they eat them.
- Avoid sweets that look damaged, opened or tampered with.

2. Stay visible when trick-or-treating

- Wear something bright or reflective so that drivers can see you.
- Consider adding reflective strips to costumes or bags.
- Use a torch when walking after dark.
- Always use pavements and cross at safe crossing points.
- Young children should always be accompanied by a responsible adult.

3. Choose costumes carefully

- Make sure costumes fit properly to avoid trips and falls.
- Check that masks do not restrict your child's vision or breathing.
- Be particularly careful around candles and naked flames. Fancy dress costumes can catch fire easily.
- Battery-operated candles or LED lights are a safer alternative to real candles in pumpkins.

4. Take care with pumpkins and decorations

Carving pumpkins can be fun, but sharp knives can cause injuries. Adults should do the carving, keeping children at a safe distance. Consider using battery-operated lights rather than candles inside pumpkins.

🔥 Bonfire Night: Enjoy the fireworks safely

Fireworks and bonfires can be spectacular, but they can also cause serious injuries if safety precautions are not followed.

Where possible, we recommend attending an organised public fireworks display rather than holding your own at home.

If you are celebrating at home, remember:

- Keep children and pets at a safe distance from bonfires and fireworks.
- Never allow children to handle or light fireworks.
- Only buy fireworks from licensed sellers and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Never return to a firework once it has been lit, even if it appears not to have gone off.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies and for safely disposing of used fireworks.
- Never throw fireworks or put them in your pockets.
- Keep bonfires well away from buildings, fences, trees and anything that could catch fire.
- Never leave a bonfire unattended.
- Avoid wearing loose clothing that could catch fire.

A special word about sparklers

Sparklers may look harmless, but they burn at extremely high temperatures and can cause serious burns.

- Sparklers should never be given to children under five.
- Children should always be closely supervised by an adult.
- Never hold a baby or young child while holding a sparkler yourself.
- Wear gloves and hold sparklers at arm's length.
- Have a bucket of water ready to put used sparklers into, as they remain hot for some time after they go out.

Burns and scalds: What should you do?

Burns can happen quickly, particularly around bonfires, fireworks, sparklers, candles and hot drinks.

Knowing what to do if someone gets burned can make a real difference to their recovery.

The most important thing to remember is: COOL, REMOVE, COVER.

1. COOL – Cool the burn immediately

- Hold the affected area under cool running tap water for at least 20 minutes.
- Do this as soon as possible, ideally straight after the injury. Cooling can still help if started within three hours.
- Do not use ice or iced water, as this can cause further damage.
- Keep the rest of the person warm while cooling the burn, particularly children.

2. REMOVE – Remove jewellery and clothing

- Carefully remove jewellery, watches and clothing near the affected area before swelling develops.
- Do not attempt to remove anything that is stuck to the skin.

3. COVER – Protect the burn

- Once cooled, loosely cover the burn with cling film laid over the affected area, rather than wrapped around it.
- Alternatively, use a clean, non-fluffy dressing.
- Do not put cling film on the face.

What should you NOT do if someone gets burned?

- Do not put butter, oil, toothpaste, creams or ointments on the burn.
- Do not apply ice or ice packs.
- Do not burst any blisters, as this can increase the risk of infection.
- Do not pull away clothing that is stuck to the burned skin.

When should you seek medical help?

Not all burns need hospital treatment, but it is important to know when to get help.

Call 999 or go to A&E if:

- The burn is very large or deep.
- The burn affects the face, genitals or bottom.
- The burn has been caused by chemicals or electricity.

Contact NHS 111 if:

- You are unsure how serious the burn is or what to do.
- You or your child needs urgent advice about a burn or scald.

You can visit [NHS 111 online](#) or call 111.

For further information, visit the NHS website: [Burns and scalds – NHS](#).

Enjoy the celebrations safely

Halloween and Bonfire Night should be enjoyable occasions for everyone. Taking a few simple precautions, keeping children supervised and knowing what to do in an emergency can help prevent avoidable accidents.

From everyone at the practice, we wish you and your family a happy Halloween and a safe and enjoyable Bonfire Night!

Stay safe and take care,

Dr Maya Chowdhury