



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: MIKE OTTO

MY TEEF HURT! Tampered candy has been a fear for years, but when's the last time someone got a treat like this?

Taking tricks out of Halloween means less treats for children



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“Coming home totally plastered from a Halloween party helps teach kids valuable lessons about why only responsible adults should wield paring knives while carving jack-o-lanterns and about the potential dangers associated with lighting candles after you’ve spilt Sambuca all over your chest and groin.”

Every Halloween, every news outlet produces a list of safety tips that kids should follow to have a fun and productive candy-collecting night. Now, safety is no laughing matter, but with things like X-rays to scan candy for razor blades offered at hospitals or wearing hypoallergenic face paint instead of masks, our paranoid hypochondriac society has taken all of the enjoyment and spontaneity out of Halloween.

I can’t believe some of the terrible advice that’s handed out these days. For example, kids are instructed not to go inside the houses or cars of strangers. How else would those munchkins ever discover if there actually was really awesome candy or video games in there like they were promised by that charming gentleman with the lazy eye and greasy hair? Joyful romps like Halloween should allow kids to express their imagination, and if they want to do so by playing every single Xbox game ever made inside a rusty white van, they should be free to explore.

The entire art of costume construction has also been hampered by these draconian safety regulations. Forcing kids to wear reflectors or bright costumes only serves to alert any malevolent hoodlum with rudimentary flashlight skills to a child’s presence. Those little ghosts and goblins should wear the darkest, spookiest costumes possible so as not to make themselves visible to criminals

or passing motorists—most of whom are already drunk anyways and could mistake little Billy’s reflectors for the headlights of an oncoming car that wants to play chicken.

As well, toy manufacturers make rubber masks with tiny eyeholes with a purpose in mind. If all kids wore hypoallergenic cosmetics, there wouldn’t be any valid reason for adults to leave hoses, rakes, chunks of driftwood, and grass-covered, four-foot-deep holes on their lawn. These companies have a vested interest in physical comedy, and this should be appreciated—if only for the fulfillment as we imagine the joy and surprise erupting on those children’s cherubic faces as they stumble about frantically while the earth beneath their feet mercilessly gives way.

Urban legends of kids receiving candy apples with razor blades or baked goods laced with cyanide result in the egregious waste of many delicious, unwrapped food items every year by concerned parents. Fun-loving adults can remedy this by checking their children’s open treats vigilantly through the use of a neighborhood kid to taste the goodies first. What worked for the royals should be good enough for your family. On the offhand chance that the Johnson boy remarks that the bitter almonds in the Oreo cookie he’s testing are disgusting, then collapses, you should take note: your younger children could have fatal

nut allergies just like him. If not, it would be wise to at least wash the cookie off before allowing your child to eat it.

Of course, the best way to show children what not to do during Halloween is to lead by example. Coming home totally plastered from a Halloween party helps teach kids valuable lessons about why only responsible adults should wield paring knives while carving jack-o-lanterns, and adults about the potential dangers associated with lighting candles after you’ve spilt Sambuca all over your chest and groin.

If you don’t have your own kids, you can still be a safety role model this Halloween by renting children—or, as the laymen call it, “babysitting.” Scores of parents go out for Halloween, leaving many youngsters who need a Big Brother or Sister for safe trick-or-treating. This is an excellent opportunity for young adults to act as trustworthy companions who enjoy receiving their own pillowcases full of candy with minimal personal effort. It’s all about that special feeling you get when the difference you’ve made in a child’s life also nets you a delicious milk-chocolate mustache.

Still, the most effective approach to ensure child safety at Halloween is to keep them all under house arrest in an environment devoid of gaiety or pranks. One can never be too careful these days.

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