

Halloween Hazards

Every year around Halloween, the Maryland Poison Center receives requests for information on candy or other food items that might be tampered with. Fortunately, many differences in taste or appearance are the result of manufacturing processes. For example, a "piece of glass" might be an undissolved sugar crystal or tree sap due to the presence of nuts. A bitter or sour taste might be undissolved citric or ascorbic acid. Graying chocolate is fat "bloom" from heat exposure or sugar "bloom" from dampness.

The National Confectioners Association has provided poison centers and law enforcement agencies with a **Halloween Candy Hotline** to report all suspected candy tampering as well as help in identifying harmless occurrences. Please notify the **Maryland Poison Center** of any cases you become aware of:

1-800-222-1222

Other Halloween-related injuries and exposures that are brought to the attention of the poison center and emergency departments include:

- eye and oral irritation from breaking or biting into glow sticks
- eye irritation from spraying hair spray and hair coloring in the eyes
- eye abrasions from sharp objects attached to masks or costumes
- skin irritations or rashes from decorative face paints or creams
- burns from flammable costumes ignited by flames from candles and Jack O'Lanterns
- injuries from falls
- choking on gum, peanuts, hard candies and small toys

DID YOU KNOW THAT..... Glow sticks have a low order of toxicity?

Glow sticks, also known as cyalume lightsticks, consist of a plastic tube containing a glass ampoule with luminescing and activating components. The primary ingredient is dibutyl phthalate. Exposures usually occur when a child bites into the glow stick or breaks it open and splashes the liquid into the eyes or on the skin. Dibutyl phthalate causes an immediate stinging or burning sensation as well as profuse lacrimation. Only mild adverse effects are likely to occur. Irrigation and dilution are recommended therapies.



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If you do not wish to receive faxes or emails from the Maryland Poison Center, call 410.706.7604 or circle your fax number and fax this back to 410.706.7184. Supported by Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene