



Trick-or-Treat?

By Tanesha Slaughter

If you think that cavities are your biggest health issue during Halloween, think again. Consuming considerate amounts of black licorice, glow stick poisoning, and lead poisoning are a few of the issues you should pay special attention to this Halloween.

Rather than tricking yourself into some harmful black licorice, treat yourself to dodging several health problems.

Black licorice contains a compound called glycyrrhizin. This herb is known to cause powerful pharmacological effects on the human body. Not only does glycyrrhizin cause a dramatic fall in potassium levels, it is broken down in the digestive tract into a compound called glycyrrhetic acid, which causes cortisol and aldosterone like effects in the kidneys and vascular tissues.

Too much black licorice can cause abnormal heartbeats, heart attacks, and other heart issues especially in older adults, according to the FDA. Other side effects of eating lots of black licorice are sodium and water retention, edema, congestive heart failure and lethargy according to the FDA.

Glow sticks are a wonderful way to brighten all kinds of events, especially on Halloween when walking the dark and gloomy streets at night. Incident reports of poisoning are higher around Halloween, according to ncpoisoncenter.org. Glow sticks contain a chemical called dibutyl phthalate, which is a clear liquid that is minimally toxic. It can irritate the eyes, and throat if swallowed. The North Carolina Poison Center suggested that if the chemical enters the eyes, parents should rinse the eye thoroughly for 10 minutes. If irritation persists contact the NCPC.

If the chemical is ingested, the mouth should be wiped with a wet towel and the child should be offered a glass of water.

Lead is considered a neurotoxin and the legal US limit is 0.06 by weight according to foxnews.com. Paint on witch and skull shaped buckets, a Frankenstein drinking cup and fake teeth have been found to contain lead. The fake teeth were found to have lead in excess of 6 percent above the US regulatory limits, according to Foxnews.com.

Lead poisoning should be avoided by checking the materials worn and what the children are putting in their mouths.

Halloween can be a fun experience, however, parents and adults, do not forget to take the normal precautions for every year. Make sure if you or your child is wearing a mask that it is properly ventilated and it does not block the peripheral view. Always supervise children, especially when crossing the street. Always check wrapped candy and dispose of unwrapped candy.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN HAPPY HALLOWEEN