

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOLLOWING A FEW SIMPLE SAFETY STEPS CAN KEEP HALLOWEEN A SWEET TREAT

CHICAGO (Oct. 2, 2009) – Halloween is quickly approaching and many shoppers are already looking for the newest costumes and decorations. In fact, in 2008, there were 36 million potential “trick-or-treaters” between the ages of 5 and 13. Despite the downturn in the economy, the National Retail federation estimated last year that Americans spent an average of more than \$66 on Halloween supplies.

“By taking a few simple steps, this Halloween can be a holiday filled with treats,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “Nothing is scarier than spending Halloween in the emergency room.”

Prevent Blindness America wants to make sure everyone enjoys a safe and happy holiday and advises the following:

- Always wear hypoallergenic make-up. Adults should apply the make-up and remove it with cold cream or eye make-up remover instead of soap. Follow product guidelines about applying product directly around the eyes.
- False eyelashes should only be applied and removed according to the manufacturers instructions on the products package.
- Avoid costumes with masks, wigs, floppy hats or eye patches that block vision. Tie hats and scarves securely so they won't slip over children's eyes.
- Avoid costumes that drag on the ground to prevent tripping or falling. Do not use roller blades or ride a bike, scooter or skateboard while wearing a costume.
- Avoid pointed props such as spears, swords or wands.
- Wear bright, reflective clothing or decorate costumes and bags with reflective tape/patches. Carry a bright flashlight to improve visibility.
- Always accompany children while trick-or-treating. Only go to houses you are familiar with.

- Carefully examine all trick-or-treat items for signs of tampering before allowing children to eat them. Inspect any toys or novelty items received by kids age 3 and younger as they may pose a choking hazard.
- Jack-o-lanterns should be placed in areas where trick-or-treaters or Halloween party guests won't be able to trip over them or have costumes brush up against them. All tripping hazards should be removed from sidewalks and porches.

Prevent Blindness America also wants to remind the public that it is illegal to purchase cosmetic contact lenses without a prescription. Because any contact lens is considered a medical device, only an eye care professional can ensure that the lenses are used and cared for properly. Misuse of lenses can result in bacterial infections, swelling, eye pain, sensitivity to light, conjunctivitis (pink eye), corneal scratches, corneal ulceration, and loss of clarity. If left untreated, these conditions can result in permanent eye damage and loss of sight.

For more information on Halloween safety or contact lens safety, please call Prevent Blindness America at 1-800-331-2020 or visit www.preventblindness.org.

About Prevent Blindness America

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, divisions and chapters, Prevent Blindness America is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call (800) 331-2020 or visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org.

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