

## **Keep Trick or Treating fun, healthy and safe for Everyone**

Trick or treats can be fun, and the candy and other items can be great. But it can be not so fun for those who have food allergies.

Rather than offering candy and other food treats, consider joining the Teal Pumpkin Project to promote non-food treats for kids with food allergies or those who would prefer healthy alternatives.

Teal Pumpkin Project was created in 2014 by Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE). It is a worldwide movement to create a safer, happier Halloween for all kids. Putting a teal pumpkin on your doorstep means you have non-food treats available. This simple act promotes inclusion of trick-or-treaters with food allergies or other conditions.

You can take part by, providing non-food treats for trick-or-treaters. Then place a teal pumpkin in front of your home or trunk if you do trunk or treat to indicate that you have non-food treats available.

To keep kids with allergies safe and those who prefer a non-food treat, offer alternatives. This should not be expensive. You can visit the local dollar store or shop the internet for inexpensive items. FARE has some suggestions on their website, as well as a list of supporters whom you may choose to shop. Trick or treat items suggested include: stickers, bouncy balls, glow-in-the goodies such as sticks, necklaces or bracelets, bubbles, stickers, pencils, temporary tattoos or even character band aids. Once you have selected which non-food items to provide, you can decide if you would like to have food treats and the non-food goodies or just the goodies. After you make the decision, visit FARE to print a sign letting Trick or Treaters know that you have options. A teal pumpkin will draw attention to the awareness of food allergies.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shares: that “a food allergy occurs when the body has a specific and reproducible immune response to certain foods.” How the body reacts is different for everyone, a slight rash to a severe and life threatening response such as anaphylaxis. The CDC says that “food allergies are a growing food safety and public health concern that affect an estimated 4 percent to 6 percent of children in the United States.” One in 13 children in the U. S. has a food Allergy as reported by FARE.

Add a teal pumpkin to your decorations and participate in the Teal Pumpkin project, non-food treats are good choices for all kids as it is healthy and safe for everyone and can be just as fun for Halloween.