

Avoiding Pumpkin Carving Injuries

As families prepare for Halloween, it is important to keep in mind that carving the traditional “jack-o-lantern” can be a tricky and slippery business. Tendons, nerves and arteries are close to the palm surfaces of fingers and thumbs and can be easily cut if the knife slips. If the unexpected does happen, seek professional medical help. The complex structures in the hand require careful examination and repair in order to preserve full function.



The American Society of Hand Therapists recognizes the hazards of this tradition and has provided suggestions for avoiding the unanticipated scare of a puncture or laceration.

Choose the best location

The carving area should be well lit so that you can see clearly during the carving process. A dry location is important as a small amount of moisture can cause the knife to slip and cause an unwanted injury. Be sure that your hands, carving tools and the pumpkin are dry.

Adults should do the actual carving

Children can clean the pumpkin and draw the design on the pumpkin, but using the sharp tools should be left to the adults. Children often sustain injuries because they may not appreciate the force needed to cut or have the control to use the tools.

Buy pumpkin carving kits

These kits have tools that are smaller and easier to control with blades less likely to get stuck in the pumpkin. Sharp, long kitchen knives may go in easily, but may need extra force to pull out causing an injury.

Use safe carving technique

The position of your hands is important when carving the pumpkin. Always cut away from yourself in small controlled strokes. If you cut toward the hand holding the pumpkin, the knife could hit a soft spot or slip and cut the hand. If you hold the back of the pumpkin and push the knife directly into the face, it could go too far and puncture the hand.

***By following these tips and carving with care,
the scariest scene on the block will be your decorations and costume!***