

Pumpkin Carving Injury Prevention Tips

To prevent hand injuries while carving pumpkins, ASHT recommends the following safety tips:

- **Ask for help carrying a big pumpkin** -- Big pumpkins are fun to carve but their weight can put lots of stress on your hands, wrists and arms. Lift your pumpkin carefully. Ask for help if your pumpkin is too heavy.
- **Make sure your pumpkin carving spot is well-lit, clean and dry** -- Be sure to wash and carefully dry all of the tools that will be used as well as the cutting surface. Any moisture on your tools, surface or hands can cause a slip that can lead to a nasty cut or other injury.



- **Always have adult supervision** -- Children and adolescents often sustain injuries because adults allow them to do the carving on their own. It only takes a second for a severe injury to occur.
- **Leave the cutting and carving to adults** -- Don't let children carve. Let children clean the pumpkin and scoop out the inside pulp and seeds. "Encourage kids to draw a design or face on the pumpkin with markers for an adult to carve out," suggests ASHT Past President, Stacey Doyon.
- **Carve with care** -- When carving, cut away from yourself and cut in small, controlled strokes. Cutting through thick pumpkin skin can cause strain to your hands, wrists and arms. Use the right tool for the job and be patient.
- **Sharper is scarier** -- A sharper knife is not necessarily better. Often, sharper kitchen knives become lodged in the thicker part of the pumpkin. "An injury can occur if your hand is in the wrong spot when you use force to remove the knife from the firm pumpkin shell," warns Doyon.
- **Use Pumpkin Carving Kits** -- During the Halloween season, pumpkin carving kits are available in many stores. The kits include smaller, serrated pumpkin saws that often work better for carving because they are less likely to get stuck in the thick pumpkin skin. "These saws are specially designed for pumpkin carving so they are often more effective than household cutting knives," affirms Doyon.

