

**Halloween can be a fun time for the whole family, but can also be stressful and dangerous for your canine companion. Your dog may be exposed to many unfamiliar sights and sounds, especially with the array of scary costumes available. The whole family should consider the following points to ensure the safety of your dog during this festival.**

With all the sweets and treats around at this time, do keep your dog away, especially from chocolate and raisins as these are toxic to dogs. Chocolate contains theobromine which can be lethal – the darker the chocolate the higher amounts of theobromine. Do contact your vet immediately if you suspect your dog has eaten these food items – especially if you see any of the following symptoms; vomiting, a sore abdomen, excessive thirst, excitability, drooling, changes in heart rate and arrhythmias or convulsions.

### Top Tips:

- 🐾 Unfamiliar sights and sounds can lead to nervous responses such as cowering, playtime 'frenzy', and possible aggression – taking your dog for a walk earlier in the day may mean he has less energy to react to trick or treaters in the evening
- 🐾 Provide a quiet and cosy familiar place in the house for your dog to retreat to so he is less likely to be exposed to trick or treaters – this may include a favourite room or play pen. Provide him with chew toys, his favourite blanket or a comfort item
- 🐾 Do not force your dog to receive any unwanted attention, even from family members, as he may not recognise his owner if in costume, and this may make him very uneasy
- 🐾 Never force your dog to wear a dog costume or put anything on him if it inhibits the use of his senses, i.e do not cover up his eyes, nose or ears
- 🐾 Be careful of decorations such as costume accessories as some parts may easily become loose and your dog may choke or become tangled up. Lit candles (including those placed inside pumpkins) can easily harm your companion – so keep these items out of reach and do not leave your dog unattended
- 🐾 Think twice about taking your dog on a trick or treating outing, as the extra excitement around the event or added attention from strangers may cause him distress. Also other dogs may not be too welcoming of another dog in their area
- 🐾 Be extra careful when opening the door to any visitors as your dog may escape. He is more likely to run away if he is frightened by Halloween costumes. Do not leave your dog alone where he may see hyperactive children or people in strange costumes as this may cause him to become fearful or anxious

**Please keep a watch over your dog this Halloween to reduce any chance of distress, so that he and the rest of the family can enjoy the celebrations without any foreseeable accidents.**

If you have any particular concerns about your dog's behaviour do speak to your vet who should also be able to advise or recommend a reputable behaviour specialist.

Dogs Trust © 2013. This factsheet is copyrighted. All rights reserved. You may print this factsheet for your own information and photocopy it if multiple copies are required. You may not sell it, reproduce it on the Internet, or reprint it in any publication without permission from Dogs Trust Legal Department.