

Avoid a Ghoulish Disaster this Halloween: Follow these Pumpkin Carving Tips and Keep Hands Safe

Orthopaedic hand surgeons, who are members of The American Society for Surgery of the Hand, offer pumpkin carving tips to decrease the volume of preventable pumpkin carving hand injuries this Halloween season.

Rosemont, IL ([PRWEB](#)) September 21, 2004 -- The American Society for Surgery of the Hand (ASSH) urges pumpkin carvers to use caution this Halloween season and take steps to prevent hand injuries when carving.

“Every Halloween season we see four or five patients—both adults and children—who come into our office with severe injuries to their hands and fingers,” says Jeffrey Wint, MD, an ASSH member from The Hand Center of Western Massachusetts, Springfield, MA. “Treatment can often run three to four months from the time of surgery through rehabilitation.”

To prevent hand injuries, the ASSH suggests the following safety tips:

*** Carve at a Clean, Dry, Well-lit Area**

Wash and thoroughly dry all of the tools that you will use to carve the pumpkin: carving tools, knife, cutting surface, and your hands. Any moisture on your tools, hands, or table can cause slipping that can lead to injuries.

*** Always Have Adult Supervision**

“All too often we see adolescent patients with injuries because adults feel the kids are responsible enough to be left on their own,” says Wint. “Even though the carving may be going great, it only takes a second for an injury to occur.”

*** Leave the Carving to Adults**

Never let children do the carving. Wint suggests letting kids draw a pattern on the pumpkin and have them be responsible for cleaning out the inside pulp and seeds. When the adults do start cutting, they should always cut away from themselves and cut in small, controlled strokes.

*** Sharper is not Better**

“A sharper knife is not necessarily better because it often becomes wedged in the thicker part of the pumpkin, requiring force to remove it,” says Wint. “An injury can occur if your hand is in the wrong place when the knife finally dislodges from the thick skin of the pumpkin. Injuries are also sustained when the knife slips and comes out the other side of the pumpkin where your hand may be holding it steady.”

*** Use a Pumpkin Carving Kit**

Special pumpkin carving kits are available in stores and include small serrated pumpkin saws that work better because they are less likely to get stuck in the thick pumpkin tissue. “If they do get jammed and then wedged free, they are not sharp enough to cause a deep, penetrating cut,” says Wint.

Should you cut your finger or hand, bleeding from minor cuts will often stop on their own by applying direct pressure to the wound with a clean cloth. If continuous pressure does not slow or stop the bleeding after 15 minutes, an emergency room visit may be required.



For more information about the American Society for Surgery of the Hand and its free "Find a Hand Surgeon" service offered to the general public, please visit: www.handcare.org

The mission of the American Society for Surgery of the Hand is to advance the science and practice of hand surgery through education, research and advocacy on behalf of patients and practitioners.

The field of hand surgery deals with both surgical and non-surgical treatment of conditions and problems that may take place in the hand or upper extremity (from the tip of the hand to the shoulder). Hand surgeons can set fractures, provide appropriate nerve care, treat common problems like carpal tunnel syndrome and tennis elbow, reattach amputated fingers, create fingers for children born with incompletely formed hands, and help people function better in their day-to-day lives through restoring use of their fingers, hands, and arms.

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