

## **PRINT SCRIPT-Teal Pumpkins remove the scary side of Halloween**

Halloween isn't always a treat for the millions of kids across the country who have food allergies.

According to the organization Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE), in the U.S., one in 13 children has a food allergy – that's roughly two in every classroom. Many of the sources of those allergies can be found in candy including nuts, soy, wheat, milk or eggs. Even "fun" size candy bars can cause a serious reaction for kids with allergies or food-related diseases.

OSF HealthCare Saint Luke Medical Center in Kewanee is promoting participation in [The Teal Pumpkin Project](#). Dietician Sara Umphleet says the effort involves providing a non-food item for trick-or-treaters.

"All candy can be potentially cross-contaminated with some of those food allergens. So, it's really scary and parents are really wary and afraid of going out on Halloween and Trick-or-Treat night so offering options besides candy is a really good way to include those children who do have those food allergies," she suggested.

Umphleet says there are inexpensive options available in most retail outlets.

"Glow sticks are really good for Halloween. Bracelets, those Halloween fangs that kids love and wear are really good options. I know that I'm gonna offer some different options – some things I would pick up at the Family Dollar or the Dollar Store," she said.

But, Umphleet points out, there are some options you should avoid.

"Things that you do NOT want to offer are going to be like some of the Silly Strings or Silly Puddy because those have wheat in them and those are one of the food allergens."

Umphleet stresses this effort is not meant to replace the tradition of giving out candy because many people hand out both candy and non-food treats but she emphasizes the importance of keeping the options in separate containers.

The Teal Pumpkin Project website has posters and teal pumpkin cut-outs you can use to let parents and kids know you also have non-food items to hand out. You can also register your house on a global map that lists participating homes in every neighborhood.

FARE also recommends families managing food allergies keep the following Halloween safety tips in mind:

- Enforce a "no eating while trick-or-treating" rule, so that you have time to review all food labels.
- Avoid candy and treats that do not have an ingredient label.
- Always have an epinephrine auto-injector available, if prescribed.
- Keep in mind that the mini-size, fun-size, or bite-size version of candy may contain different ingredients than their full-size counterparts. Make no assumptions, and read all labels carefully.
- Keep the emphasis on the fun, rather than the candy.
- Remember that a candy that has been safe for your child in the past may now have different ingredients. Read the label every time.