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No Tricks, Just Treats: Halloween Candy Safety Risks

As Halloween approaches, District residents are reminded to remain vigilant in checking for tampered or drug-laced candy and to take steps to protect themselves and their children. Every year, there are incidents of tampered or drug-laced candy nationwide, although there have been no reported cases of District residents accidentally consuming candy that has been tampered or drug-laced.

- On October 16, a Pennsylvania police department released a statement on Facebook warning parents about candy containing 400mg of THC—the primary psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. The candy was not intended to be distributed on Halloween, but the brand closely resembled a common candy raising the risk that children could unknowingly consume a tainted product.
- Last October, a 5-year-old boy in Ohio suffered a seizure and later tested positive for methamphetamines—a stimulant known as meth or speed—after consuming tainted Halloween candy. Last year, Kentucky parents reported to law enforcement that they found alcohol-laced candy in their child's Halloween candy. According to the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), THC has been found in Halloween candy including candy bars, brownies, and gummies while methamphetamine has been found in gummies and hard candies.
- In 2018, police in California reported a case of foreign objects found in Halloween candy. In 2016, there were at least two cases of nails found inside Tootsie Rolls. Three incidents of tampering—candy containing needles and other sharp objects—were reported to the Honolulu Police Department in 2015.

BEST PRACTICES: HALLOWEEN CANDY SAFETY

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends eating only factory-wrapped candy and avoiding homemade candy and treats distributed by strangers. Parents and guardians are encouraged to:

- Inspect all candy for possible choking hazards or tampering—throw away any candy with misspelled labels, broken seals, tears, pinholes, or unusual odors and discoloration.
- Check non-candy items, including rings, bracelets, necklaces, and fake teeth, as well.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you suspect a child has ingested a drug-laced or tampered candy and then contact local police.
- Report suspicious activity to the [iWatchDC](#) platform.
- Contact the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 with any questions about possible tainted candy.

