

NEWS RELEASE

Hand and Wrist Specialist, Dr. Andrew Foret, Gives Safety Tips for Pumpkin Carving

Halloween is right around the corner and that means many will soon engage in a time-honored tradition – pumpkin carving. Dr. Andrew Foret, board certified hand and wrist specialist at Center for Orthopaedics, an affiliate of Imperial Health, provides several safety tips for the Halloween season.

“Unfortunately, it’s common to see both adults and children with hand and finger injuries – some of them severe – this time of year,” says Dr. Foret. “More serious injuries can often mean three to four months of treatment, including surgery and rehabilitation.”

Dr. Foret says injuries during pumpkin carving can be avoided with the right precautions. He shares these tips from the American Society for Surgery of the Hand:

Carve in a Well-Lit, Dry Area

Although your jack-o-lantern may look the best when glowing eerily at night, it needs to be carved in a clean, dry, well-lit area. “Any moisture on your tools, hands or carving surface can cause slipping that leads to injuries,” warns Dr. Foret. “Wash and thoroughly dry all of the tools you’ll be using – including your hands.”

Always Have Adult Supervision

While pumpkin carving can be great fun for children, Dr. Foret says adult supervision and participation is key to preventing injuries. “An injury can occur in a split second. Even if the carving seems to be going well, it’s important not to leave children unattended with carving supplies.”

Leave the Carving to Adults

Pumpkin carving can easily be turned into a fun activity for the whole family. It’s much safer for children to be responsible for drawing a pattern on the pumpkin and helping to clean out the pulp and seeds and leave the cutting for adults. “When adults do the cutting, they should cut away from themselves and do so in small strokes,” Dr. Foret continues.

Sharper is not Better

A sharper knife is not necessarily better, because it can become wedged in the thicker part of the pumpkin, requiring force to remove it. 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 also occur when the knife slips and comes out the other side of the pumpkin where your hand may be holding it steady. “Pumpkin carving kits are easily found in local stores,” says Dr. Foret. “The best advice is to use these instead of your sharp kitchen knives. The tools in these kits are not sharp enough to produce deep cuts.”

If a cut does occur while carving, keep in mind that bleeding from a minor cut should stop on its own within a relatively short amount of time. “Use a clean cloth and put direct pressure on the wound,” Dr. Foret advises. “If bleeding persists after 15 minutes, you should seek medical attention.”

Dr. Foret is Board Certified by the American Board of Surgery (ABS). He joined Center for Orthopaedics in 2011. For more information on any hand or wrist problem, or to schedule an appointment, call 337-721-7236.