

OPINION

Play it safe, kids

Trick-or-treaters, start your engines.

Halloween is nearly here — one of the most enjoyable evenings of the year for most youngsters. However, it's also a time of particular risk for them. With that in mind, Halton Regional Police and the Milton Fire Department offer the following tips for all those little ghosts and goblins Saturday night.

- Young children should be accompanied by an adult, while the older kids should trick-or-treat in groups, or at least pairs.

- Be visible. Wear light-coloured clothing and bring a flashlight. Wear reflective stripes on clothing and use face paint rather than masks or things that will cover the eyes. Also, make sure costumes

are short enough to avoid tripping.

- Have children plan their route and share it with you and the family.

- Stay off roadways. Walk on sidewalks where possible, and if there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic. Also, look both ways before crossing the street.

- Don't eat treats until parents have looked at them first. Candy should not be eaten if the package is already opened.

- Accept treats at the door only. Never enter a stranger's home, and only visit homes where the lights are on.

Police are also urging motorists to take extra care Saturday and watch out for youngsters while driving.

Happy Halloween. Be safe — and have fun.



ReadersWrite

E-mail letters to editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com. Letters, which may be edited, must include the writer's name, address and phone number.

Warning about flu shot dangers off the mark

DEAR EDITOR:

I'm writing this letter to express my concerns about a column published in the "Ask the Professionals" section, written by a chiropractor, of the October 14 *Champion*.

In her column, Dr. Angela Barrow warns people about the potential hazards associated with vaccination against influenza.

Although she did not outright recommend that people not get a flu shot, comments such as "serious concerns over the safety of these flu vaccinations," "potential health dangers you are opening yourself and your children to from these toxic chemicals," and "many people who receive the flu shot immediately get the flu" may lead people to believe that getting the flu shot causes more harm than good.

I believe that this is a dangerous and misleading message to send out to the public, particularly with influenza season rapidly approaching and pandemic H1N1 influenza on its way.

The fact is that influenza is a potentially lethal infection. Those at the highest risk are infants, seniors and those with chronic diseases such as asthma, COPD and diabetes. Influenza is also highly communicable, so even those who contract the illness and suffer no more than a few days of fever, cough and aches can easily transmit the virus to others who are more vulnerable to the more serious effects of the virus.

Influenza vaccination has been stringently studied and shown to be both safe and effective and helps reduce the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, there is far too much misinformation circulating that leads people to believe otherwise.

When will this Alberta-based republican-wannabee party realize that running our country in an efficient way is more important than hidden agendas, bullying the other parties and patronages to the Senate?

Stephen Harper, shape up or ship out.

ANDREW PAXTON
MILTON

As a registered nurse in a busy emergency department, I'm fully aware of ongoing debates about the flu shot, and I can completely understand people's hesitancy to be vaccinated when they so often hear frightening information about the safety of the flu shot.

However, I've also seen the effects of influenza first hand and know how devastating it can be.

Ideally, I'd like to be able to tell everyone to go out and get their flu shot. However, I know that there are individuals who adamantly oppose influenza vaccination, and no amount of argument will ever change their minds.

So what I'm asking people to do is to educate themselves about this important topic so that they can make a truly informed decision.

Seek information from reputable sources such as the Canadian Medical Association, Health Canada and the National Advisory Council on Immunizations. These organizations make recommendations based on rigorous scientific study, and are probably the best places to go for information on the flu shot.

Better yet, talk with your family doctor, pharmacist or a registered nurse. Tell them your concerns about the flu shot and ask questions before you make a decision.

As for me, when the flu shot becomes available I'll be the first in line rolling up my sleeves to protect myself, my family and my patients.

ANGELA CONNELLY, R.N.
MILTON

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555 Industrial Dr.,
Milton, Ont. L9T 5E1

905-878-2341

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