

# HOMESAFETYMATTERS

FALL 2024



*As a basic rule of thumb, the smoother the pumpkin surface, the better. A pumpkin that is free of bumps is easier and safer to carve.*

## AVOID SCARY HALLOWEEN JACK-O'-LANTERN INJURIES

**Thousands of people visit emergency rooms every year due to injuries sustained while carving pumpkins**

Carving a pumpkin can be a fun fall family event. It can also lead to serious hand injuries.

According to a study published by National Library of Medicine, there were an estimated 20,579 pumpkin-related knife injuries from 2012 to 2021. The most common demographic injured were 10 to 19-year olds, followed by children under age 10.

To reduce the risk of injury, safety experts with the American Academy

of Orthopaedic Surgeons, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the American Society for Surgery of the Hand offer these tips:

- Dry your hands and the pumpkin before carving.
- Use the right tools. If you can, use a pumpkin-carving kit that has specialty tools designed to carve through rinds, poke holes, and scoop out the pumpkin seeds and innards.
- Stabilize the pumpkin by placing one hand on top of the pumpkin and then

carving, working your way downward. You can also cut a hole in the bottom of the pumpkin to scoop out the insides.

- Use a spoon to remove the seeds.
- Work in a clean, dry, well-lit area when you carve the pumpkin.
- Don't let young kids carve the pumpkin. You can have them draw the pattern that you plan to cut and scoop out the insides, but kids 14 and under shouldn't use the cutting tools to carve.
- Stand at least two arms' lengths away if you are watching someone else carve the pumpkin.

## HOW TO AVOID HITTING A DEER

**Deer are prevalent in fall, more active at night, dusk and dawn**

More than one million car accidents involve deer each year, resulting in \$1 billion in damage, according to auto insurer Progressive. Being prepared and knowing when and where they are most likely to be can make the difference between a close call and a collision.

October to January is deer mating season. You are twice as likely to strike an animal in November than any other month, according to the insurer.

Because deer tend to be active after sunset, it's imperative to stay alert if you're driving at night. Here are a few

tips to help you spot deer on the road and avoid an accident.

- **Be wary of the woods.** If you're driving on a road that's wooded on one or both sides, deer could be lurking just out of sight, waiting to make a run for it.
- **Slow down.** Deer don't usually travel alone. If you spot one, chances are, there are more nearby.
- **Look for glowing eyes.** Deer have yellow eyes that look like they glow in the dark. If you catch a glimpse of yellow, assume it's a deer and slow down.
- **Pay attention to deer crossing signs.** If you see a sign it means there is a large deer population nearby.



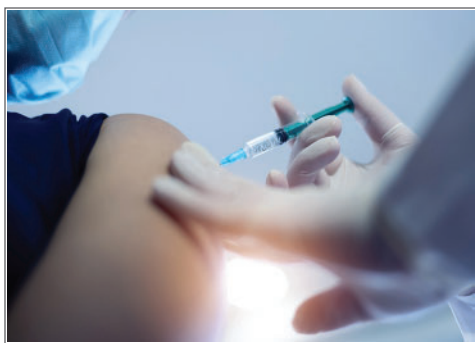
*You are twice as likely to hit an animal in November than any other month.*

- **Use your high beams.** If you're driving in a low-light area with few or no streetlamps, turn on your high beams for greater visibility. Just be sure to turn them off if you see another car coming.
- **Look out for recently killed deer.** Deer typically travel in groups. If you see a deer on the side of the road that was hit recently, others could be nearby.



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The CDC recommends getting an updated COVID-19 shot for fall and winter regardless of a person's previous vaccination status.

## COVID 2024-25

### CDC says the best time to get vaccinated is September, October

The CDC recommends everyone ages 6 months and older receive an updated 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine to protect against potentially serious outcomes.

The recommendation for this fall and winter is made regardless of whether or not a person has been previously vaccinated for COVID-19. Updated COVID-19 vaccines are now available.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is always changing and protection from COVID-19 vaccines declines over time. Receiving an updated 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine can restore and enhance protection against the virus variants currently responsible for most infections and hospitalizations in the United States.

COVID-19 vaccination also reduces the chance of suffering the effects of Long COVID, which can develop during or following acute infection and last for an extended duration. Last season, people who received a 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine saw greater protection against illness and hospitalization than those who did not receive a 2023-2024 vaccine.

CDC also recommends everyone 6 months of age and older, with rare exceptions, receive an updated 2024-2025 flu vaccine to reduce the risk of influenza and its potentially serious complications this fall and winter. While CDC recommends flu vaccination as long as influenza viruses are circulating, September and October remain the best times for most people to get vaccinated.

## FOUR PRIMARY RULES OF FIREARM SAFETY

### Responsible gun owners know how to safely handle weapons

While you're at the shooting range or anywhere you handle a firearm, safety always comes first. Trigger locks and keeping guns secure and away from children are important components of firearm safety. The Firearm Industry Trade Association has Four Primary Rules of Firearms Safety that emphasize the basics of safe firearm handling and secure storage.

1. *Always keep firearms pointed in a safe direction.* Never point your gun at anything you do not intend to shoot. In the event of an accidental discharge, no injury can occur as long as the muzzle is pointing in a safe direction. A safe direction means a direction in which a bullet cannot possibly strike anyone, taking into account possible ricochets and the fact that bullets can penetrate walls and ceilings.

2. *Treat all guns as though they are loaded.* By treating every firearm as if it were loaded, a habit of safety is developed. Firearms should be loaded only when you are in the field or on the target range or shooting area, ready to shoot. Whenever you handle a firearm, or hand it to someone, always open the action immediately, and visually check the chamber, receiver and magazine to be certain they do not contain any ammunition. Always keep actions open when not in use. Never assume a gun is unloaded — check for yourself!

## NOT OUT OF THE WOODS FOR FLEAS AND TICKS

### Protect yourself and pets: Parasite prevention is a year-round endeavor

Unfortunately, cooler temperatures do not mean you can cool it on external parasite control.

Flea and tick prevention is a year-round endeavor as recent studies have shown that ticks are more active than you might think during the winter.

According to Global Lyme Alliance, ticks remain active as long as temperatures are above freezing and the ground isn't frozen or snow covered.

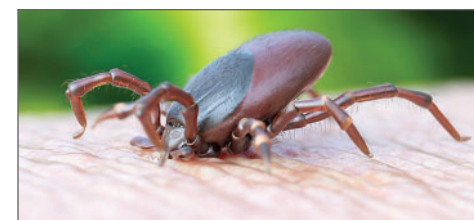
Some ticks, like the black-legged tick, which can transmit Lyme disease, are



*Never pull the trigger with the safety in the 'safe' position or anywhere in between 'safe' and 'fire.'*

3. *Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.* Never touch the trigger on a firearm until you actually intend to shoot. Keep your fingers away from the trigger while loading or unloading. Never pull the trigger on any firearm with the safety in the "safe" position or anywhere in between "safe" and "fire." It is possible that the gun can fire at any time, or even later when you release the safety, without you ever touching the trigger again.

4. *Always be sure of your target and what's beyond it.* Don't shoot unless you know exactly what your shot is going to strike. Be sure that your bullet will not injure anyone or anything beyond your target. Be aware that even a .22 short bullet can travel over 1 1/4 miles and a high velocity cartridge, such as a .30-06, can send its bullet more than three miles. Shotgun pellets can travel 500 yards, and shotgun slugs have a range of over half a mile.



*Fleas and ticks will search for warmth indoors when the temperature drops.*

particularly active during the fall. Moreover, external parasites love going into homes when the weather cools down. This means that even if you're not seeing as many of these pests outdoors, your pet may still be in danger around your home.