



GRABOW HAND TO SHOULDER CENTER

Ryan J. Grabow, MD

Board Certified, Hand to Shoulder Specialist

Providing Comprehensive Care from the Shoulder to Fingertips

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Avoid Horrific Halloween Hand Injuries with Safe Pumpkin Carving Tips

Local hand surgeon gives safety tips to prevent hand injuries this holiday.

Every Halloween season, hand surgeons see patients with injuries to their hands or fingers from pumpkin carving accidents. Although some of these injuries are minor, many wounds are severe, requiring complex surgery that takes several months for recovery. Fortunately, these devastating injuries can often be prevented. Local hand to shoulder specialist, Ryan J. Grabow, MD, reviews safe pumpkin carving tips and introduces a new *Halloween Hand Safety Section* on his educational website.

"It only takes a second for a slip of a knife to ruin a fun holiday tradition," says hand to shoulder specialist Ryan J. Grabow, MD from the Grabow Hand to Shoulder Center in Henderson, Nevada. Deep cuts to the fingers and puncture wounds to the palm of the hand are the most common injuries requiring treatment. "It's upsetting to see these injuries," says Grabow. "Most of these patients were not doing anything unusual, they just didn't follow simple carving safety techniques." While children and adolescents are especially at risk, some of the most devastating injuries happen in adults. "The potential injuries are very serious. A professional violinist suffered a career ending tendon injury due to a simple pumpkin carving accident."

To avoid potential hand injuries, Dr. Grabow recommends the following safety tips:

Prepare your Pumpkin - Moisture causes your hand or knife to slip. Dry hands, pumpkins, and tools are a must.

Have the Right Tools for the Job - Pumpkin carving kits have been created to make carving easier. The small saws and sharp plastic tools are easier to control and are less likely to get stuck in the pumpkin. "According to a study in the Journal of Preventative Medicine, these tools cause fewer and less severe injuries than serrated or plain kitchen knives." If using a kitchen knife, *sharper is not better*. They often get lodged in the thick pulp and require greater force to remove. If your fingers are in the wrong place when the knife dislodges an injury can occur.

Hold the Pumpkin with Caution – Injuries usually occur when cutting towards your hand or when the knife slips out the other side of the pumpkin where it is being held. Making small controlled cuts and using tools that cannot reach the other side helps reduce these risks. You can also use a carving board to steady the pumpkin as well.

Carving is for Adults – Little hands and sharp utensils do not mix. Have them draw the pattern and remove pulp instead.

Adolescents Still Require Supervision – Carving parties are fun but filled with distractions. If adolescents are getting together to carve pumpkins, an adult should be present to ensure the safe use of sharp carving tools.

Know First Aid for a Carving Injury – If an injury does occur, bleeding usually stops with direct pressure to the area. Clean the wound and apply a topical antibiotic and a bandage. If your finger loses feeling or can't move, the wound is deep or the entire width of your finger, or it is still bleeding after 15 minutes of pressure, go to the emergency room.

Committed to patient education and injury prevention, Dr. Grabow has an entire a section on his interactive website, **DoctorGrabow.com**, dedicated to safety issues. Parents, teachers, scout masters, and coaches are encouraged to visit the **Injury Prevention Section** of his site and review the section on **Halloween Hand Safety** for articles, multimedia resources and further carving safety tips.

The Grabow Hand to Shoulder Center was founded by board certified and fellowship trained hand to shoulder specialist Ryan J. Grabow, MD. Dr. Grabow provides comprehensive care for the hand, wrist, elbow, and shoulder emphasizing non-operative and minimally invasive techniques. Through his website, DoctorGrabow.com, visitors have access to articles, animations, and videos related to the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of injuries and conditions affecting the shoulder to fingertips.

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For more information or to schedule an interview with Dr. Grabow, contact Rosa Morin at the Grabow Hand to Shoulder Center, 702 – 433 – 9533 or email rosa@doctorgrabow.com.