

# Should teens be allowed to trick-or-treat?

Published: 10/14/2012, 12:01 AM

Updated: 10/12/2012, 12:50 PM

**By Leanne Italie**  
**Associated Press**

Patti Woods-LaVoie loves Halloween and all things candy, but she has a hard and fast rule when it comes to teens and trick-or-treating.

Show up at her door in Trumbull, Conn., with a costume – and she means something more than a baseball hat and jersey – and her candy bowl is your candy bowl.

Ring her bell in street clothes and you'll get teabags, ramen noodles, shampoo samples or some other discard from her pantry or closets.

“Some come in cars,” she said. “They park and go from neighborhood to neighborhood. My husband is just waiting for the day our house gets egged by someone who got a teabag.”

When it comes to big kids with pillow cases begging for candy on Halloween, there seem to be three camps.

The sure, why nots say they overbuy and are happy to let teens scarf up the leftovers so they don't eat it all themselves.

The No's find it overly cynical when older kids aren't in costumes that took some planning.

And the middle-grounders believe teens aren't in it just for the loot and still truly enjoy the ritual of dressing up and going door-to-door.

So how old is too old for trick or treating?

“I'm cutting mine off at 14, but if teens show up at my door and are polite I'll give them

candy,” said Betsy Tant in Knoxville, Tenn., mom to a 13-year-old daughter and two younger kids.

Last year, when her daughter was 12, “someone said they felt it was inappropriate for her to be trick or treating, even though she was with her 4-year-old sister,” Tant said. “They assumed she was a teen because she’s tall. They were mad. I had to intervene and it was very uncomfortable.”

Other candy givers who are also parents said it feels more like extortion than good fun when the older teens show up, especially hulk-sized boys mowing over toddlers to get to the door.

“I also think it’s about adults not trusting older kids,” Tant said. “With teens, Halloween can be more about tricks.

Teens tend to be more impulsive and less concerned with consequences.”

Laurie A. Couture’s 18-year-old son, Brycen, said he went trick-or-treating with his mom until he was 15. He wanted to enjoy the holiday with her after his adoption at age 11.

“I wanted to have that experience with my mom. I’ve always loved the idea of dressing up in funky costumes,” he said.