



## COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR A SAFE HALLOWEEN

OCTOBER 7, 2020

The following guidance applies to trick-or-treaters, to those giving out treats, and to potential gatherings planned around the Halloween festivities.

Please refer to the following link for guidance from [the CDC on Holiday Celebrations](#), which includes the numerous holidays coming up in the next three months.

### BACKGROUND ON COVID-19

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that is spread through the air via respiratory droplets from an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces. The virus can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. It is thought that the virus may also spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose, mouth, or eyes, causing infection.

### TRICK-OR-TREATING

**Trick-or-treating is strongly discouraged.**

[The CDC has identified trick-or-treating as a high-risk activity for virus transmission.](#) Activities that are considered high-risk include going door to door, trunk-or-treat events, Halloween parades where participants are out of their cars or yards, haunted houses, Halloween parties, and fall festivals. These activities are strongly discouraged.

In addition, gatherings that involve multiple households are still not allowed, including gatherings that happen on front porches, front stoops, parking lots, etc.

### CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES TO TRICK-OR-TREATING

- Participate in a Halloween watch party using online video and chat options so attendees can interact with each other.
- Participate in a virtual costume party – best costume, make your own costume contest.

- Have virtual craft projects and contests: pumpkin carving, painting, mask decorating contests, home decorating contests.
- Consider a candy scavenger hunt in the house or yard.
- Plan a contact-free neighborhood-wide scavenger hunt that allows for social distancing.
- Parades where participants stay in the car or in their own yards. For example:
  - Drive-by event or contest where individuals dress up or decorate their vehicles and drive by judges that are appropriately physically distanced.
  - Drive-through events where individuals remain in their vehicles and drive through an area with Halloween displays.
  - Drive-through event where individuals can receive a treat bag (limited to commercially packaged treats) or takeaway item from an organizer while participants remain in the vehicle.
  - Children can stay in their yards in costume and neighbors drive by and gently toss candy out the windows as they pass by (or fire department or law enforcement drive by).

### TRICK-OR-TREATING GUIDANCE

As noted above, trick-or-treating is strongly discouraged. However, if you choose to participate in trick-or-treating, below are guidelines to do so as safely as possible while participating in a high-risk activity.

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#### FOR FAMILIES:

- Trick-or-treat only with others from your household. Stay within your household group. Maintain at least 6 feet from people outside your household.
- Use protective equipment. Wear a face covering before you leave your home and do not take it off until you are back home. Refrain from touching your face or face covering during trick or treating as much as possible. If you are wearing a costume that covers your face, but exposes your nose or mouth, you must wear a face covering underneath your costume's mask. If your costume covers your face but is a flimsy or thin material, you should also wear a face covering. Everyone over age 2 should wear a face covering. Many costumes that cover your face may not be thick enough or may have holes that do not prevent COVID-19 particles from passing through. Gloves can also be worn to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 especially if you expect to reach into bowls to grab treats. Refrain from taking gloves on or off and potentially getting COVID-19 on your skin or hands. Wash your gloved hands before taking the gloves off.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from other groups or trick-or-treaters. While walking on the street or in the neighborhood, stay at least 6 feet away from other groups, including when crossing paths or on the street or in line.
- One group at a time to each door or stoop. If you walk up to a residence or location for candy, only one group should approach the door or location at a time. Other groups should wait

their turn safely at least 6 feet apart from your household group. Approach the door or location after the group ahead of you has left.

- Use the least amount of contact to knock on doors or push doorbells. If there is a doorbell, try not to use your fingers or hands, especially if you have touched your face or face covering. Try using an elbow, or if able, tissue paper, costume sleeve, cape, or other material as a buffer between your finger and the doorbell. If there is no doorbell, knock with your knuckles and if possible, knock with a material as a buffer between your knuckles and the door.
- Accept treats that are pre-packaged, not homemade or loose. Pre-packaged treats from the store are ideal as they can be wiped down prior to opening and have a barrier between the treat and your fingers. Do not accept treats that are homemade or loose (without packaging) such as candy corn. You may not be aware or know if the person who made the treats is sick or if someone in their household is sick and whether they touched the loose candy with their bare hands or coughed on them. Be cautious when accepting treats and use your best judgment.
- Be courteous and respectful. If you come to a home with no outside lights on, pass by that house. The resident may be at high risk for COVID-19 and not want to participate this year, or someone may be ill in the home and not want to be bothered.
- Wait until you get home. Though it may be hard to do, ask children and those trick-or-treating to wait until they get home to inspect or eat their treats. This lessens the amount of times someone takes on or off their face covering and also how often they touch their face. Once home, you can inspect your treats to see if there are any you don't want to eat or may want to dispose of. Please use your best judgment.
- If you are ill or have any COVID-like symptoms, do not participate. If you or anyone in the household has symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, difficulty breathing), do not participate in any Halloween activities.

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#### FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Treats to give: To help lower the risk of COVID-19, treats that are pre-packaged by a manufacturer are safer to give out than food items that are homemade or loose, such as brownies or candy corn. Do not open or re-package store bought foods into smaller bags as that may mean touching the surface of the candy or treat and possibly contaminating the food item. If you are giving out items that are not food but are homemade or repackaged together, such as headbands, clips, decorative pencils, stickers etc., wear gloves - during the creation process, while placing in a bowl, or handing out.
- Use protective equipment. Before opening doors or serving trick-or-treaters, always put a face covering on first. Do not remove the face covering until after the door is closed or you are finished serving. Gloves can be worn to help mitigate the risk.
- Giving treats without opening doors. If you do not want to open your door but want to give out treats yourself, you can set up a table or chair outside in your yard, porch, or driveway so that as trick-or-treaters arrive you can give out treats without opening your door. Wear a face covering if you go outside your home. You can watch from your porch. Use tongs to give out

the treat. If you do not want to go outside, leave instructions on the chair or table for trick-or-treaters.

- Opening doors. Ideally, leave treats at the front door or distanced from your home so you do not have to open the door. Make sure that your protective equipment, such as face coverings and gloves, are on before opening the door. Do not let anyone enter your home who does not reside there. Pre-place tape on the ground at least 6 feet in front of the door. After opening the door, ask trick-or-treaters to step back to the tape. Ask trick-or-treaters to stand in a line, at least 6 feet apart, one person at a time, to get their treat.
- Giving treats. You can take extra precautions by giving out treats by using tongs, a spatula, a treat chute (for instance PVC pipe) or other grabbing utensil to reduce how often treats touch hands or skin. Do not recommend allowing trick-or-treaters to put their hands inside the treat bowl to grab items as this may spread germs or contaminate treats.
- If you are ill or have any COVID-like symptoms, do not participate. If you or anyone in the household has symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, difficulty breathing), do not participate in any Halloween activities.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS ZERO-RISK.

IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN HALLOWEEN ACTIVITIES, PLEASE CELEBRATE SAFELY.

