

Responsible RestartOhio



Celebrating Halloween

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to use caution and plan ahead for Halloween festivities. Decisions on whether to participate should be made by local communities, individuals, and parents/guardians.

Always follow current state public health orders and rules/regulations established by your local community, and check the [Ohio Public Health Advisory System](#) to determine COVID-19 risk levels in your county before making decisions about Halloween activities. Some communities may choose to cancel Halloween events, so check with local sources before making plans.

This guidance is designed to help curb the spread of COVID-19. It will be reassessed and updated as the situation evolves and we learn more in the weeks leading up to Halloween. For additional precautions, please see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance [here](#).

Recommended Best Practices

General Guidance

- It is strongly recommended that hayrides, haunted houses, and trunk-or-treating events be canceled/avoided.
- It is strongly recommended that Ohioans exercise caution when deciding to participate in trick-or-treating and other events that put them in close contact with people outside their households. According to the CDC, traditional trick-or-treating, with treats handed to children who go door-to-door, is a high-risk activity and should be avoided.
- Consider lower- or moderate-risk, socially distant ways to celebrate, such as:
 - Holding a drive-through or drive-in trick-or-treat event, with children in costume and face coverings staying in cars and collecting treats from individuals spaced at least 6 feet apart.
 - Holding drive-by costume or car-decorating contests with judges who are physically distanced.
 - Leaving treats for friends and neighbors.
 - Carving/decorating pumpkins with members of your household and displaying them or carving/decorating pumpkins outdoors, at a safe distance, with neighbors or friends.
 - Holding costume parties or pumpkin carving events or contests online, such as by video conference.
 - Hiding treats outside your home as an alternative to trick-or-treating
 - Holding a Halloween scavenger hunt, giving children lists of Halloween-themed things to look for while they walk outdoors from house to house.
 - Holding a scavenger hunt-style trick-or-treat search with your household members in or around your own home.
 - Having a Halloween movie night with people you live with or having an outdoor Halloween movie night with local family friends and people spaced at least 6 feet apart. If screaming will likely occur, greater distancing is advised.
 - For other ideas, see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance [here](#).
- Do not hold large in-person Halloween parties. If holding smaller parties, limit attendance to 10 or fewer people and hold the event in an outdoor area where social distancing is possible. Avoid activities, such as bobbing for apples, that foster the spread of infection.
 - Lower your risk by following CDC's recommendations on [hosting gatherings or cook-outs](#).
- Always wear a face covering and stay 6 feet away from people who are not from your household, whether trick-or-treating, passing out treats, or attending attractions or events.
 - Face coverings should never be placed on children younger than 2 or anyone who cannot easily remove them.
 - A costume mask is not a substitute for a cloth mask. A costume mask should not be used unless it is made of two or more layers of breathable fabric that covers the mouth and nose and doesn't leave gaps around the face.
 - Do not wear a costume mask over a protective cloth mask because it can be dangerous if the costume mask makes it hard to breathe. Instead, consider using a Halloween-themed cloth mask.
- If you may have COVID-19 or may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should not participate in in-person Halloween festivities and should not give out candy to trick-or-treaters.
- Carry hand sanitizer and use it often, especially after coming into contact with frequently touched surfaces and before eating candy.
- Select events/attractions that are held outdoors and allow attendees to stay in their cars (such as drive-through event with displays) or socially distance. Avoid events that involve being crowded in a small area or coming into contact with/being touched by others.
- Consider the people in your household who may be at [greater risk of complications](#) if COVID-19 is brought into the home, such as those with certain health conditions, women who are pregnant, or older family members.

Recommended Best Practices

For Parents/ Guardians

- If taking your children trick-or-treating, limit the number of houses you visit and ask your children to stay as far from treat-givers as possible. For small children, consider holding the bag for them.
- Wipe off candy wrappers with sanitizing wipes when you arrive home. (NOTE: Never wipe unpackaged food with wipes.)
- Allow children to eat only factory-wrapped treats. Avoid homemade treats made by strangers.
- If your child is at greater risk of complications from COVID-19, contact your doctor before allowing participation in Halloween activities.

For Community Members

- For trick-or-treating, reach out to neighbors to discuss ways to ensure 6-foot social distancing, how candy can most safely be distributed, and the need for face coverings.
- Refrain from having children select their own treats from a bowl/common container or set up a hand-sanitizing station.
- Consider lining up individually wrapped goodie bags on porch steps, a table in the driveway, or the edge of the driveway or yard with a sign asking children to take only one. Or use other creative ways to distribute treats, such as using a candy “slide” made of PVC pipe, or hanging treats from a wall or fence.
 - If you are preparing goodie bags, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 second before and after preparing the bags.

For Operators of Events/ Attractions

- Follow all state requirements and guidelines for [Consumer, Retail, Services & Entertainment sectors](#), as well as any local requirements or guidelines.
- Do not allow groups to intermingle. Reduce capacity to allow for 6-foot social distancing between groups as well as employees/volunteers at all times. Reinforce distancing with markers or dividers.
- Have hand sanitizer readily available to all participants.
- Pre-sell tickets to ensure capacities are limited.
- Consider eliminating common seating areas or play areas where children and others might congregate. If seating is provided, keep it outdoors, separate benches/tables by at least 6 feet or use dividers, and sanitize between each use.
- Notify your local health department immediately if you learn that someone with COVID-19 has visited your attraction.