



Guidance for Safer Halloween Celebrations During the COVID-19 Pandemic



Many families may be preparing to participate in the upcoming fall tradition of Halloween. As families start to plan their Halloween activities, Fort Bend Health & Human Services reminds residents that some of the traditional ways in which this holiday is celebrated will increase the risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and spreading the disease to family and friends. Following guidelines will assist in families in enjoying a safe and festive Halloween celebration.

Low Risk Halloween Activities:

- Planning virtual parties/contests/activities (e.g. costume contest, pumpkin carving, listen to a short audiobook, make Halloween themed treats, Halloween Bingo)
- Creating a Halloween themed scavenger hunt with your household members in or around your home or while walking outdoors from house to house
- Organizing car parades such as:
 - a. Drive by events or contests where individuals dress up or decorate their vehicles and drive by “judges” that are appropriately physically distanced
 - b. Drive through events where individuals remain in their vehicles and drive through an area with Halloween displays
 - c. Drive in events where individuals can receive a treat bag (limited to commercially packaged non-perishable treats) or take away item from an organizer while the participants remain in their vehicle
- Viewing Halloween themed movies with your household members at home or at drive in theaters
- Dining at outdoor restaurants serving Halloween themed meals
- Dressing up homes and yards with Halloween themed decorations

Medium to High Risk Halloween Activities:

- Attending a costume party while wearing protective face masks and people can remain a social distance of more than 6 ft. apart:
 - a. A costume mask (such as for Halloween) 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 does not leave gaps around the face
 - b. **Do not wear a costume mask over a protective cloth mask.** It can be dangerous if the costume mask makes it hard to breath. Instead, consider using a Halloween-themed cloth mask
- Going to an open-air, one-way, walk-through haunted forest where appropriate mask use is enforced, and people can remain more than 6 ft. apart
 - a. If screaming will likely occur, greater distance is advised. The greater the distance, the lower the risk of spreading disease
- Visiting pumpkin patches or orchards where people use hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples, wearing masks is encouraged or enforced, and people are able to maintain social distancing
- Hosting an outdoor Halloween movie night with local family friends with people spaced at least 6 ft. apart
 - a. If screaming will likely occur, greater distance is advised. The greater the distance, the lower the risk of spreading disease
 - b. Lower risk by following [CDC's recommendations on hosting gatherings or cook-outs](#)





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Highest Risk Halloween Activities (not recommended):

- Door to door trick-or-treating is a close contact high-risk event by design. When handing out candy, it is very difficult for hosts to maintain social distancing between themselves and the participating children or to ensure social distancing among the children. It is also challenging to ensure that everyone answering or coming to the door is wearing a face mask and washing or sanitizing their hands appropriately
- “Trunk or treating” where children go from car to car instead of door to door to receive treats also carries a higher risk. Children often get excited and rush up to see the selection making it difficult to avoid crowding and to prevent them from swapping food. In addition, children often like to touch several items before making a selection
- Halloween gatherings, events or parties with non-household members, whether indoor or outdoor, typically result in close contact, thereby increasing your risk of getting infected or spreading disease
- Mass gatherings like those that occur at carnivals, festivals, live entertainment, and haunted houses have proven to more easily promote disease transmission due to screaming, laughter, and close contact

Personal Protection Measures:

Regardless of how you choose to celebrate Halloween it is important to keep the following in mind:

1. Correctly wear a cloth face covering to prevent disease spread when outside your home and around others that are not part of your household
2. Avoid indoor spaces that do not allow for easy distancing of at least 6ft between you and others
3. Avoid close contact – Stay at least 6 ft away (3 or more adult steps) from people who are not part of your own household, especially while talking, eating, drinking, and singing
4. Wash or sanitize your hands often
5. Clean frequently touched items regularly
6. If you are sick, or you have been in contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19 stay home, and away from others

Wear masks with two or more layers to stop the spread of COVID-19. Wear the mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.

For more info, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

For additional Halloween guidance, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>

