



# Arkansas Department of Health

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## Halloween Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic

Many traditional Halloween activities can be high-risk for spreading viruses, including SARS-CoV-2, which is the cause of COVID-19. There are several safer, alternative ways to participate in Halloween. As you decide on how you will celebrate Halloween, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) strongly encourages you to take the precautions listed below to protect yourself, your loved ones and others from spread of COVID-19.

If you have COVID-19, think you might have it, 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.

### Masks

- 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 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.

### Treat guidance

- Parents should limit the number of houses children visit
- Only let children eat factory-wrapped candy that has been wiped off with a sanitary wipe

### Lower risk activities

These lower risk activities can be safe alternatives. Keep socially distant and wear your cloth masks, not a Halloween mask alone.

- Carving or decorating pumpkins with members of your household and displaying them
- Carving or decorating pumpkins outside, at a safe distance, with neighbors or friends
- Decorating your house, apartment, or living space

- Doing a Halloween scavenger hunt where children are given lists of Halloween-themed things to look for while they walk outdoors from house to house admiring Halloween decorations at a distance
- Having a virtual Halloween costume contest
- Having a scavenger hunt-style trick-or-treat search with your household members in or around your home

### **Moderate risk activities**

- Participating in one-way trick-or-treating where individually wrapped goodie bags are lined up for families to grab and go while continuing to social distance (such as at the end of a driveway or at the edge of a yard).
  - If you are preparing goodie bags, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after preparing the bags.
- Having a small group (no more than 10 people), outdoor, open-air costume party or parade where people are distanced more than 6 feet apart.
- Having a trunk-or-treat event where masks are worn and social distancing can be assured (i.e. in a large parking lot where treats can be funneled through a PVC pipe or placed in treat bags for participants to pick up instead of handed out directly).
- Going to an open-air, one-way, walk-through haunted forest where appropriate mask use is enforced, and people can remain more than 6 feet apart.
  - If screaming will likely occur, greater distancing is advised. The greater the distance, the lower the risk of spreading a respiratory virus.
- Visiting pumpkin patches or orchards where people use hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples, wearing masks is enforced, and people are able to maintain social distancing.

### **Higher risk activities**

**Avoid** these higher risk activities to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19:

- Participating in traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children who go door to door.
- Having trunk-or-treat where treats are handed out from trunks of cars lined up in large parking lots where social distancing between participants can't be ensured.
- Attending crowded costume parties held indoors or large outdoor gatherings.
- Going to an indoor haunted house where people may be crowded together and screaming.
- Going on hayrides or tractor rides with people who are not in your household.