

# GUIDANCE FOR CELEBRATING HALLOWEEN SAFELY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

SOLANO PUBLIC HEALTH | SEP 2020

Solano Public Health offers the following considerations to help protect individuals, families and communities from COVID-19. In general, the more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. Remember the safety protocols – wear a mask, watch your distance and wash your hands.

## Lower-Risk Halloween Activities

Consider these lower-risk Halloween activities that families can do to celebrate Halloween:

- 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 Halloween movie night with people you live with
- Having a scavenger hunt-style trick-or-treat search with your household members in or around your home
- Participating in vehicle-based gatherings like drive-in movies and drive-through attractions, or car parades where participants do not leave their vehicles

## Higher-Risk Halloween Activities

The following are higher-risk Halloween activities according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Participating in traditional door-to-door trick-or-treating
- Attending crowded costume parties held indoors
- Going to an indoor haunted house where people may be crowded together and screaming
- Going on hayrides and tractor rides with people who are not in your household
- Traveling to a rural fall festival outside of your community if you live in an area with community spread of COVID-19

## Trick-or-Treating

The CDC considers traditional trick-or-treating a high-risk activity for spreading COVID-19 because it can be difficult to maintain physical distancing at crowded doorsteps. If you decide to participate, here are the following tips.

### Safety Tips for Trick-or-Treaters:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Ensure that your family members are wearing a face covering that covers the nose and mouth at all times.
  - Do not use a Halloween costume mask as a substitute for a cloth mask unless it is made of two or more layers of breathable fabric that covers your mouth and nose and does not leave gaps around your face.
  - Do not wear a costume mask over a cloth mask because it can be dangerous if the costume mask makes it hard to breathe. Instead, you can use a Halloween-themed cloth mask.
- Maintain 6-feet physical distancing from others outside of your household as much as possible.
- Establish markers for groups of trick-or-treaters to distance from one another as they line up for candy.
- Hand sanitize frequently while out in public, especially after coughing or sneezing.

## Safety Tips for Homeowners:

- Do not hand out candy if you are sick.
- Set up markers to mark 6-foot distances in front of the home and leading up to the front doorstep.
- Participate in one-way trick-or-treating where goodie bags are prepared ahead of time and placed on a distribution table.
  - When preparing goodie bags, wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after preparing these bags.
  - These goodie bags can be lined up for families to grab and go while continuing to physical distance.

## Guidance for Safer Social Interactions

The safest approach is to stay home and interact with people within your household. If you do decide to interact with others, be mindful of potential risks and find ways to celebrate as safely as possible.

- If you decide to interact with others outside your own household, keep it small, make sure people wear masks, tell invitees not to come if they feel ill in any way, and ensure that people are able to maintain 6-foot physical distancing from each other.
- Outdoors is safer than indoors. Indoor spaces are riskier than outdoor spaces because it might be harder to keep people apart and there is less ventilation. Regardless of the venue, stay six feet apart and always wear a face covering around people outside of your own household.
- Limit the number of guests. This not only lowers your risk of exposure to the virus, but small numbers also make it easier to maintain physical distance.
- Keep distance from people who are at higher risk for severe illness, such as older adults and those with underlying medical conditions. Consider inviting them through video chat instead.
- Ensure supplies that promote healthy hygiene are readily available, including hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol, paper towels, masks and disinfectant wipes.
- Discourage people from sharing items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.
- If you are feeling sick, stay home. It is not worth the risk of infecting friends and loved ones you'll see at a gathering. Consider leaving if you start feeling sick at the gathering.

## General Best Practices

- Wear a face covering whenever you leave home.
- Wash hands often frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Sneeze and cough into your elbow or a tissue.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces regularly, including keys, door handles, and handrails.

## What to Do if You Were Exposed to COVID-19 or Start to Feel Ill

If you were exposed to someone who is sick with COVID-19 or have any one of the following symptoms that is new and not otherwise explained, get tested for COVID-19.

### Here are symptoms of COVID-19:

- |                                                |                                      |                           |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Fever, chills, repeated shaking or shivering | • Difficulty breathing               | • Muscle pain             |
| • Cough or sore throat                         | • Feeling unusually weak or fatigued | • Headache                |
| • Shortness of breath                          | • New loss of taste or smell         | • Runny or congested nose |
|                                                |                                      | • Diarrhea                |

## Getting Tested for COVID-19

To get tested for COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider. You can also register for free testing at the State's community testing sites even if you do not have symptoms or do not have health insurance. Sign up through [www.LHI.care/covidtesting](https://www.LHI.care/covidtesting) or call 888-634-1123. Same-day appointments are available, and results are provided within 2-3 business days.

You can also find additional testing sites through the Project Baseline Testing Program at [www.projectbaseline.com/study/covid-19](https://www.projectbaseline.com/study/covid-19)

## Resources

- For guidance from the CDC about Halloween activities organized by risk, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html#halloween>
- For local information and guidance about COVID-19, visit [www.solanocounty.com/covid19](https://www.solanocounty.com/covid19)
- For additional information and guidance from the State, visit [www.covid19.ca.gov](https://www.covid19.ca.gov)