

# Halloween should be spooky, not scary!

## Governor Cuomo asks for your help to make sure everyone has a healthy and safe Halloween.

Halloween celebrations and activities, including trick-or-treating, can be filled with fun, but must be done in a safe way to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The best way to celebrate Halloween this year is to have fun with the people who live in your household. Decorating your house or apartment, decorating and carving pumpkins, playing Halloween-themed games, watching spooky movies, and trick-or-treating through your house or in a backyard scavenger hunt are all fun and healthy ways to celebrate during this time.

### Creative ways to celebrate more safely:

- Organize a virtual Halloween costume party with costumes and games.
- Have a neighborhood car parade or vehicle caravan where families show off their costumes while staying socially distanced and remaining in their cars.
- In cities or apartment buildings, communities can come together to trick-or-treat around the block or other outdoor spaces so kids and families aren't tempted to trick-or-treat inside – building residents & businesses can contribute treats that are individually wrapped and placed on a table(s) outside of the front door of the building, or in the other outdoor space for grab and go trick-or-treating.
- Make this year even more special and consider non-candy Halloween treats that your trick-or-treaters will love, such as spooky or glittery stickers, magnets, temporary tattoos, pencils/erasers, bookmarks, glow sticks, or mini notepads.
- Create a home or neighborhood scavenger hunt where parents or guardians give their kids candy when they find each "clue."
- Go all out to decorate your house this year – have a neighborhood contest for the best decorated house.
- Carve and decorate pumpkins at home – try some new creative ideas and have a family contest.
- Play Halloween-themed games with members of your household.
- Watch spooky movies.
- Trick-or-treat room to room in your home.

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**If you feel your family can't wait until next year for the more traditional Halloween activities, and you are planning to celebrate outside your home this year, make sure you follow these simple Do's and Don'ts to help keep your family and your community safe and healthy.**

### **Do:**

- Enjoy virtual celebrations or socially distanced activities that are outdoors as much as possible.
  - If there are a high number of cases in your area, it is important to skip any in-person celebrations or activities altogether.
  - You can check the number of cases in your area on the **New York State Department of Health COVID-19 Tracker**.
- Trick-or-treat only with your household family group. Consider a family costume theme!
- Always stay socially distanced from those who are not living in your household. (You don't want to get too close to a witch, a ghost, or especially a virus!)
- For those choosing to give out treats, avoid direct contact with trick-or-treaters.
- Give treats outdoors. Set up a station with individually bagged or packaged treats for kids to take. Participate 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).
  - It is best to take candy only if it is individually wrapped in a sealed wrapper or baggy, and is available to grab and go placed separately from other candies, so kids can easily pick up their treats without touching candy another child will take (e.g., no bowls).
  - If setting a grab and go station, set it six feet from your front door, which will allow trick or treaters to feel comfortable to approach, knowing they will not be in close contact with anyone at the location.
- All individuals over age two and able to medically tolerate a face covering must wear face coverings or cloth masks. Most Halloween masks won't be sufficient to meet Department of Health guidance, so ensure you wear a face covering that provides adequate protection.
  - See if you can incorporate your face covering into a costume, but remember, a face covering must always be made of two or more layers of breathable fabric that covers the mouth and nose and doesn't leave gaps around the face.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before, during and after any Halloween activities.
  - Consider carrying Halloween-themed or decorated hand sanitizer or leaving some out for your treat-or-treaters to use.
- Only give out, or pick up, commercially wrapped treats that are sealed.

### **Don't:**

- Trick-or-treat or leave out candy if you are sick, live with someone who is sick, have been exposed to someone known to have COVID-19 in the last 14 days, are under isolation or quarantine, or have traveled internationally or to a state affected by the **NYS Travel Advisory** in the last 14 days.
- Participate in traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed out at the door and where you cannot stay socially distanced.
- Pick out candy from a bowl or receive candy directly from someone's hands.
  - If there is crowding in front of a home, or if treats are directly taken from a bowl or directly handed out from someone's hands, skip that house and find a safer option.
- Trick-or-treat in crowded streets or neighborhoods where social distance cannot be maintained.
- Trick-or-treat indoors, unless you are at your own house with family members.
  - You should especially avoid any crowding in elevators, hallways or stairwells.
- Trick-or-treat in large groups.
- Take candy from someone else's candy bag.
- Host or attend a party or any type of gathering or event, whether it is indoors or outdoors over the mass gathering limits set for your area.
  - Events lasting several hours or that have people who have traveled from other areas where transmission is higher put your family most at risk of COVID-19 transmission.
  - If you do go to an event and see a large crowd, or if there are others there who are not wearing face coverings or staying socially distanced, you should leave and find another way to celebrate Halloween.
- Wear a Halloween mask instead of a face covering, unless the Halloween mask meets the face covering guidance.
- Wear a Halloween costume mask **OVER** a cloth face mask; it can make it difficult to breathe.
  - Instead, skip the costume mask this year and choose a cloth face mask that compliments your costume or is Halloween-themed.

