

# Helpful Halloween Tips



Halloween is creeping up on us. Though the holiday will certainly look different this year, it can still be safe and fun in unexpected ways. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) encourages alternatives to traditional, door-to-door trick-or-treating this year to limit the potential spread of COVID-19.

It's important to follow best practices to help prevent the virus from spreading. Wear a mask that fully covers your nose and mouth, wash your hands frequently and maintain at least 6 feet of distance from people outside your household. Avoid crowds. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there are ways to minimize the risk of catching or spreading the virus while having fun on Halloween.

## General Recommendations

### Choose the safest options

- [Wear a mask](#) that fully covers your nose and mouth, wash your hands frequently and keep your distance whenever you are out in public or around people who are not a part of your household.
- Outdoor gatherings are generally safer than indoor gatherings.
- Smaller groups are generally safer than larger groups.
- Shorter gatherings are generally safer than longer gatherings.
- It's safer to gather with people who consistently wear masks, keep physical distance and follow other prevention recommendations.

### Protect yourself and others

People should not participate in any in-person activities, including handing out candy, if:

- They are sick, especially with [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- They have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 and are currently in the quarantine period.
- They have recently tested positive for COVID-19 and are currently in the isolation period.
- They are at [increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19](#). Those in high-risk categories should weigh the risks and benefits of activities they are considering. Participating in virtual activities is the safest option.

### Trick-or-treating

CDPHE encourages alternatives to traditional, door-to-door trick-or-treating this year to limit the potential spread of COVID-19.

- Door-to-door trick-or-treating involves mixing lots of different households at close range. When you open your door to hand out candy, you are unlikely to be able to keep at least 6 feet of distance.

- Door-to-door trick-or-treating means many closer interactions over a short period of time. Taken together, these may raise the risk of COVID-19 spread.
- It can be difficult not to mingle with friends and neighbors. Even if you intend not to interact, by being out and about, it may be hard to avoid.
- Communicate with your neighbors to plan trick-or-treating this year. Get creative and figure out ways to hand out candy while keeping appropriate distance. For example:
  - Line up individually wrapped treats at the end of the driveway or yard's edge. Watch the fun and enjoy the costumes from a distance.
  - Use a plastic slide, cardboard tubes, or plastic pipes to deliver candy from a distance.
  - Take kids on an outdoor, distanced treasure hunt to look for candy or Halloween-themed items.
- Whatever form your trick-or-treating takes, it's safest to:
  - Stay in your own neighborhood.
  - Have adults accompany trick-or-treaters to help them follow precautions.
  - Stay with your household members. Avoid mingling with groups from other households; stay at least 6 feet away from non-household members.
  - If going door-to-door, limit the time you spend at doorways.
  - Whether you're trick-or-treating or handing out candy, keep your masks on -- save the candy eating for when you return home!
  - Follow [regular Halloween safety tips](#) such as decorating costumes and bags with reflective tape or stickers and carrying glow sticks or flashlights to help increase visibility among drivers.

### **Costume masks vs. COVID-19 masks**

- Costume masks are not a substitute for masks that protect against COVID-19 spread. Masks that protect against COVID-19 should be made from two or more breathable fabric layers that cover the nose and mouth, with no gaps around the face. Wear non-costume masks when indoors with non-household contacts and outdoors whenever 6 feet of distance cannot be maintained.
- If wearing a costume mask over a cloth mask makes it hard to breathe, consider a Halloween-themed cloth mask as part of the costume instead.
- While the state mask order applies to indoor settings only, specific counties may have outdoor mask orders.
- Kids age 10 years and younger are not required to wear a mask, but CDPHE recommends everyone 3 years and older wear one, unless they cannot medically tolerate it.

### **Personal gatherings**

- Follow local and state group size and mask orders and guidance and use the dial framework for all indoor personal gatherings.
- Have Halloween events outside whenever possible.
- Remind guests to stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms, are positive for COVID-19 or have had recent close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- Remind guests to wear masks that cover their nose and mouth at all times when around others (except when eating or drinking), to wash their hands frequently and to maintain at least 6 feet of distance. Have a supply of back-up masks at your event in case a guest needs one.

- Avoid buffet lines, self-serve table spreads or bars where guests can congregate and handle shared food or drink; instead, hand out food to your guests individually. Use individually wrapped items and pre-portion items before the event.
- Provide access to restrooms and handwashing areas. Provide soap and disposable towels or hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Avoid singing and shouting, as these activities may increase the risk of COVID-19 spread.
- Keep a list of guests and their contact information so they can be notified quickly in the event of a COVID-19 exposure.
- If gathering indoors, improve ventilation by bringing in air from outdoors (opening windows and doors when safe) or maximizing air filtration and circulation through an HVAC or portable system.
  - See CDPHE's COVID-19 [ventilation recommendations](#)

As you're planning ways to celebrate Halloween safely this year, think carefully about how you might lower the risk, not only for yourself and your family, but for your community. Whether you celebrate at your house or have fun from a distance, we have some ideas to make Halloween a treat for you and your family based on [El Paso County's current level in CDPHE's dial framework, Safer at Home Level 2: Concern](#). CDPHE has given El Paso County by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, November 4 to fully implement **these changes**. Plan a small get together, ideally outdoors, with family and close friends; no more than 10 people outside your household. Help your neighborhood with proper social distancing and one-way flow by drawing directional arrow and 6-foot spacers. Other ideas include:

- **Scavenger Hunt House**  
Create a variety of theme rooms in your home and send the kids on a scavenger hunt for fun swag. Hide candy, toys and prizes. You can even create "gift certificates" that kids can trade in for prizes like staying up late, choosing a movie or eating an extra piece of candy.
- **Carving Pumpkins**  
Get members of your household together and carve pumpkins at home! Show off your skills and display them for all friends and neighbors to see! As always, just be careful to avoid pumpkin carving injuries. Have your children draw a face with markers and save the carving for the adults.
- **Decorate Face Masks**  
Order [cloth face masks](#) and decorate, doodle or bedazzle them to match your children's Halloween costume! Get creative with fabric paints, embroidery and other crafty ideas.
- **Scary Movie Night**  
Set up a virtual scary movie night and simultaneously watch with friends from the safety of your own homes.
- **Neighborhood Parade**  
Staying close to home? Organize a neighborhood costume parade where the route is predetermined and marked to maintain safe distances between participants. Stay safe by incorporating sanitizer stations, yellow caution tape, 6-foot sidewalk stickers/tape, age group signs, and more!

- **Individual Grab Bags**

Place candy in individually packaged treat bags for safe and socially distanced pickup. Place the bags spaced far apart on your porch or driveway, or string them from festive lights, a fence or a tree! If you are preparing goodie bags, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after preparing bags.

- **Pumpkin Patches and/or Apple Orchards**

Visiting pumpkin patches or orchards this fall? Pack your hand sanitizer, mask and remember to practice social distancing. Don't forget to use hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples.

Regardless of how you celebrate, keep the **Big 3** in mind:

1. **Wear a mask**
2. **Practice social distancing**
3. **Wash your hands**

**More Resources:**

- [CDPHE Halloween Tips and Tricks](#)
- [CDC Holiday Celebrations](#)

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