

BE SAFE AND HAVE FUN ON

ORANGE COUNTY  
NORTH CAROLINA

# HALLOWEEN!

## Safer, Alternative Ways to Participate in Halloween

Many traditional Halloween activities can be high-risk for spreading viruses. There are several safer, alternative ways to participate in Halloween. If you may have COVID-19 or you 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.

**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says traditional outdoor trick or treating or trunk and treating where treats are handed to children are lower risk this year, but limiting crowds is a good idea.**

### Lower Risk Activities

These lower risk activities can be safe alternatives:

- Carve or decorate pumpkins with members of your household and displaying them
- Carve or decorate pumpkins outside, at a safe distance, with neighbors or friends
- Decorate your house, apartment, or living space
- Create a Halloween-themed scavenger hunt where children are given lists of things to look for while they walk outdoors from house to house admiring Halloween decorations at a distance
- Have a virtual Halloween costume contest
- Have a Halloween movie night with people you live with
- Have a scavenger-hunt, trick-or-treat search with your household members in or around your home rather than going house to house



### Moderate Risk Activities

- 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)
  - If you are preparing goodie bags, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 second before and after preparing the bags.
  - Do not leave the candy by the road as many candy ingredients are toxic to animals.



[www.orangecountync.gov/Halloween](http://www.orangecountync.gov/Halloween)

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- Have a small group, outdoor, open-air costume parade
- Attend an outdoor costume party where protective masks are used and people can spread out
- Participate in traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children who go door to door
- Have a trunk or treat where treats are handed out from trunks of cars lined up in parking lots
- Go to an open-air, one-way, walk-through haunted forest where appropriate mask use is enforced and people can remain more than six feet apart
  - If screaming will likely occur, greater distancing is advised. The greater the distance, the lower the risk of spreading a respiratory virus.
- Visit pumpkin patches or orchards where people use hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples, where wearing masks is encouraged or enforced, and where people are able to maintain social distancing
- Have an outdoor Halloween movie night with local family friends with people spaced at least 6 feet apart
  - If screaming will likely occur, greater distancing is advised.
  - Lower your risk by following CDC's recommendations on [hosting gatherings or cookouts](#).

## High Risk Activities

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

- Attend crowded costume parties that are held indoors
- Go to an indoor haunted house where people may be crowded together and screaming
- Go on hayrides or tractor rides with people who are not in your household
- Use alcohol or drugs, which can cloud judgment and increase risky behaviors
- Travel to a fall festival with large crowds



**Keep in mind that children ages 11 and under are not eligible to be vaccinated and that only a percentage of 12- to 18 year-olds have been vaccinated against COVID-19.**

If you may have COVID-19 or you 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.

## What If You Are Vaccinated?

If you're fully vaccinated, almost all interactions are quite low risk for you. But you might still want to know about others' vaccination status to help think through how to make activities as low risk as possible for everyone, especially considering the highly contagious Delta variant. It is not a violation of HIPAA to ask someone about their vaccination status. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) restricts doctors and insurance companies from disclosing information about their patients.

Precautions such as masks, distancing and use of outdoor spaces are especially needed if you interact regularly with high-risk individuals or people who haven't been vaccinated yet, such as children under 12 years old.

You can get practice and gain comfort in asking about vaccination status by asking friends about their vaccination status before interacting closely with them. If you learn that a close friend or family member isn't vaccinated, consider asking why and see if you can help address their concerns. (See [How Can I Talk to My Friends and Family About Vaccines](#))



## Outside Is Always Safer

COVID-19 transmits less effectively outside due to increased air flow. Spreading out, rather than all congregating in one area, lowers the risk, especially if you are socializing with unvaccinated people.

## Remember Pedestrian Safety

If you choose to go out at night, remember:

- Be seen! Carry glow sticks or flashlights and wear light colored clothing.
- Always walk on sidewalks or paths. Be sure to cross the street using traffic signals and crosswalks.
- Watch for cars turning or backing up.

**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. It can be dangerous if the costume mask can make it hard to breathe. Instead, consider using a Halloween-themed cloth mask.

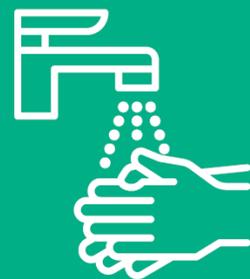
**When you do go out, be sure to remember these three important things:**



**WEAR** a cloth face covering.



**WAIT** at least 6 feet apart from others at all times.



**WASH** your hands often or use hand sanitizer.

Sources:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html#halloween>
- <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/media/3492/download?attachment>
- <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2021/how-can-i-talk-to-my-friends-and-family-about-getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19>