

Montgomery County

COVID-19 Halloween Guidance

Montgomery County Office of Public (MCOPH) health believes there are alternative ways to safely engage in Halloween activities. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) outlines Halloween festivities that are considered low, moderate and high risk for COVID-19. MCOPH has reviewed the guidelines set by CDC and below has outlined activities to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission:

General Prevention	
Feeling Ill?	If you are sick with COVID-19 like symptoms (fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea) or under isolation/ quarantine, STAY HOME!!
Social Distancing	Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet or more from people you don't live with. Be particularly mindful in areas where it may harder to keep this distance, such as restrooms and eating areas. Minimize gestures that promote close contact. For example, do not shake hands, elbow bump, or give hugs. Instead wave and verbally greet others.
Masking	A face mask or face shield should be worn at all times. Do not use a costume mask (such as for Halloween) 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 doesn't leave gaps around your face.
Cleaning/ Disinfecting	Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and shared items between uses when feasible. Use EPA-approved disinfectants.
Hand Hygiene	Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

Halloween Related Activities

Halloween Gatherings

Any public or private mass gatherings including parades, haunted houses and costume parties should follow guidance of indoor and outdoor gatherings set by MCOPH.
Submit a Health and Safety Plan, for review and approval by the MCOPH. Plans should be emailed to MontCoHalloween@montcopa.org

Trick-or-Treat

Limit group size to household contacts. If a group has individuals from different households maintain 6ft of social distancing, wear a mask and do not share objects.
Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items.
Do not grab candy from a bowl. Use the grab and go method which includes individually wrapped bags of candy or treats.*
Trick-or-Treating routes should be one way. Have trick-or-treaters go in one direction up and down the streets/routes to limit exposure to other groups of individuals.

Trunk-or-Treat

Submit a Health and Safety Plan, for review and approval by the MCOPH. Plans should be emailed to MontCoHalloween@montcopa.org
Park cars at least 15ft apart **in each** direction from other vehicles.
Limit how many people can walk up to a vehicle at the same time.
Eliminate areas where people would be tempted to congregate.
Find ways to provide games without the necessity of touching an object or surface, like eliminating props from your photo booth.
Designate an individual to monitor crowd control.
Designate adults (who commit to applying hand sanitizer) to give out the candy rather than encourage lots of little hands reaching inside the bowl.

*Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that handling food or eating is associated with directly spreading COVID-19. It is possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, including food, food packaging, or utensils that have the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way that the virus is spread. Remember, it is always important to follow good hygiene to reduce the risk of illness from common foodborne germs.

Below are alternate ideas for safe Halloween related activities supported by MCOPH:

Alternative Ideas	
Set Up a Candy Graveyard	Set up fake tombstones in your yard with prizes and candy piled up next to each tombstone. You could have each kid enter the graveyard one at a time. Candy and prizes should be packaged in individual treat bags for extra safety.
Reverse Trick or Treating	People drive by houses similar to the COVID-19 birthday parades. Those in the car will throw candy or deliver it to the kids in costumes in their yards.
Handing Out Candy	Decorate tables or booths in front yards where individual bags or cups of candy can be handed out. Invent and build candy chutes for contactless trick-or-treating. Hang candy from the fence for children to grab as they pass.
Social Distance Costume Bicycle Parade	Costume wearers take to the streets as a catwalk to show off their costumes, hand out, and collect candy. People can also decorate bikes, wagons, golf carts and cars to show off their looks!
Boo or Ghost People	Dropping a Halloween goodie bag or pumpkin on the doorsteps of friends and loved ones as a contact-free way to celebrate. This usually works by sneaking to your "booing" subjects' home after dark, ringing the doorbell, leaving the treats on their doorstep and running!
Glow-in-the-Dark Egg Hunt	Egg hunts aren't just for Easter. Buy Halloween-themed eggs or Halloween-ify old plastic eggs you already own (glow sticks work, too!) with stickers or markers. Add candy and hide them in the yard or around the house.
Pumpkin Carving	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.