

COVID-19 – Halloween Guidance Considerations

As Oklahomans enter fall, families are starting to plan for the upcoming holiday season, starting with Halloween. Because some of the traditional ways to celebrate this holiday do not allow for proper social distancing, the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) is providing the following guidance to allow for safe Halloween celebrations.

When planning to host a holiday celebration, you should assess current COVID-19 levels in your community to determine whether to postpone, cancel, or limit the number of attendees.

County specific information can be found online:

<https://coronavirus.health.ok.gov/covid-19-alert-system>

Virus spread risk at holiday celebrations

Celebrating virtually or with members of your own household poses low risk for spread. In-person gatherings with people outside your household pose varying levels of risk. Event organizers and attendees should consider the risk of virus spread based on event size and use of mitigation strategies, as outlined in CDC guidance on [Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#).

For Green Counties consider:

- Permitting festivals and similar community activities that attract high density crowds, if held outdoors and with face coverings. No restrictions on in-person trick-or-treating, although encourage groups to include only household members
- Allowing indoor activities as long as occupancy is restricted to permit social distancing and all attendees wear face coverings
- Encouraging outdoor activities that avoid high-density crowds. Participants should be encouraged to wear face coverings and social distance

For Yellow Counties consider:

- Permitting in-person trick-or-treating, while encouraging groups to only include household members. Festivals and similar community activities that attract high density crowds should not occur
- Avoiding indoor haunted houses or other attractions
- Having outdoor activities that avoid high-density crowds. Participants should be required to wear face coverings and social distance. Prohibit activities that will generate screaming in close proximity of others





For Orange Counties consider:

- Permitting in-person trick-or-treating but limit groups to 10 or less, and encourage only including household members. Festivals and similar community activities that attract high density crowds should not occur
- Avoiding indoor haunted houses or other attractions
- Discouraging outdoor activities with groups larger than 10 people

For Red Counties consider:

- Discouraging in-person trick-or-treating, and limit groups to only including household members. Hours for trick-or-treating may need to be altered to minimize large numbers of people in communities at the same time. Festivals and similar community activities that attract high density crowds should not occur
- Avoiding indoor haunted houses or other attractions
- Not holding outdoor activities with groups larger than 10 people

Halloween

Many traditional Halloween activities can be higher-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.

When participating in traditional Halloween activities consider:

- Bringing supplies when trick-or-treating to help you and others stay healthy (such as masks, tissues, and hand sanitizer)
- Limiting trick-or-treating activities to outdoor environments
- Limit group activities to family units
- Limit group activities to less than 10 people
- Avoiding crowded costume parties and indoor haunted houses
- Maintaining social distancing, wearing masks, and using proper hand hygiene when attending fall festivals, pumpkin patches, and orchards
- Preparing goodie bags for grab-and-go trick-or-treating

Considerations for schools engaging in Halloween activities:





- Staggering Halloween activities by grade to promote social distancing
- Participating in outdoor trick-or-treating
- A costume mask is not a substitute for a cloth mask. Consider using a Halloween-themed cloth mask

One may also consider safer alternative activities:

- 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 rather than going house to house

After the celebration

If you participated in [higher risk activities](#) or think that you may have been exposed during your celebration, take extra precautions (in addition the ones listed above) for 14 days after the event to protect others:

- Social distance and monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19, especially people at [increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#).
- Seek out [testing](#) for COVID-19 if you feel you were potentially exposed to COVID-19.
- Inform others you may have had contact with if you develop [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#), such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, or if you [test positive for COVID-19](#).

Contact your health care provider and follow the CDC-recommended steps for [what to do if you become sick](#), and follow the [public health recommendations for community-related exposure](#).

