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GOVERNOR OF OHIO

Ohio Department of Health

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Celebrating Halloween

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to use caution and plan ahead for Halloween festivities. Decisions on whether to participate should be made by local communities, individuals, and parents/guardians.

Always follow current state public health orders and rules/regulations established by your local community, and check the Ohio Public Health Advisory System to determine COVID-19 risk levels in your county before making decisions about Halloween activities. Some communities may choose to cancel Halloween events, so check with local sources before making plans.

This guidance is designed to help curb the spread of COVID-19. It will be reassessed and updated as the situation evolves and we learn more in the weeks leading up to Halloween.

Recommended Best Practices

General Guidance

- It is strongly recommended that hayrides and haunted houses be canceled/avoided.
- It is strongly recommended that Ohioans exercise caution when deciding to participate in trick-or-treating and events that put them in close contact with people outside their households. To lower risk, consider safer, socially distant ways to celebrate, such as:
  - Holding a drive-through or drive-in trick-or-treat event, with children in costume and face coverings staying in cars and collecting treats from individuals spaced at least 6 feet apart.
  - Holding drive-by costume or car-decorating contests with judges who are physically distanced.
  - Leaving treats in the mailboxes of friends and neighbors.
  - Decorating your home and hide treats as an alternative to trick-or-treating.
  - Holding costume parties or pumpkin carving events or contests online, such as by video conference.
- Do not hold large in-person Halloween parties. If holding smaller parties, limit attendance to 10 or fewer people and hold the event in an outdoor area where social distancing is possible. Avoid activities, such as bobbing for apples, that foster the spread of infection.
- Always wear a face covering and stay 6 feet away from people who are not from your household, whether trick-or-treating, passing out treats, or attending attractions or events. Stay home if you are sick. (NOTE: Face coverings should never be placed on children younger than 2 or anyone who cannot easily remove them.)
- Carry hand sanitizer and use it often, especially after coming into contact with frequently touched surfaces and before eating candy.
- Select events/attractions that are held outdoors and allow attendees to stay in their cars (such as drive-through event with displays) or socially distance. Avoid events that involve being crowded in a small area or coming into contact with/being touched by others.
- Consider the people in your household who may be at greater risk of complications if COVID-19 is brought into the home, such as those with certain health conditions, women who are pregnant, or older family members.

For Parents/Guardians

- If taking your children trick-or-treating, limit the number of houses you visit and ask your children to stay as far from treat-givers as possible. For small children, consider holding the bag for them.
- Wipe off candy wrappers with sanitizing wipes when you arrive home. (NOTE: Never wipe unpackaged food with wipes.)
- Allow children to eat only factory-wrapped treats. Avoid homemade treats made by strangers.
- Allow If your child is at greater risk of complications from COVID-19, contact your doctor before allowing participation in Halloween activities.

For Community Members

- For trick-or-treating, reach out to neighbors to discuss ways to ensure 6-foot social distancing, how candy can most safely be distributed, and the need for face coverings.
- Refrain from having children select their own treats from a bowl/common container or set up a hand-sanitizing station. Consider placing treats on porch steps or a table in the driveway with a sign asking children to take only one. Or use other creative ways to distribute treats, such as using a candy "slide" made of PVC pipe, or hanging treats from a wall or fence.

Recommended Best Practices

For Operators of Events/ Attractions

- Follow all state requirements and guidelines for Consumer, Retail, Services & Entertainment sectors, as well as any local requirements or guidelines.
- Do not allow groups to intermingle. Reduce capacity to allow for 6-foot social distancing between groups as well as employees/volunteers at all times. Reinforce distancing with markers or dividers.
- Have hand sanitizer readily available to all participants.
- Pre-sell tickets to ensure capacities are limited.
- Consider eliminating common seating areas or play areas where children and others might congregate. If seating is provided, keep it outdoors, separate benches/tables by at least 6 feet or use dividers, and sanitize between each use.
- Notify your local health department immediately if you learn that someone with COVID-19 has visited your attraction.

Revised 9/18