



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Illinois Department of Public Health Issues COVID-19 Halloween Festivities Guidance**

*The 3 W's still apply – Wash your hands. Watch your distance. Wear your mask.*

**SPRINGFIELD** – As we head into the holiday season, starting with Halloween, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is issuing guidance to help people celebrate safely as we continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic. Guidelines include following the 3 W's – Wash your hands. Watch your distance. Wear your mask.

"One of the hallmarks of holidays and celebrations is gathering with friends, family and loved ones," **said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike.** "We are still in a pandemic, and unfortunately, this year, that means the safest way to celebrate is to stay home and plan virtual gatherings. That said, IDPH recognizes that some who will choose to gather together anyway, and instead of denying that reality, we are issuing guidance and recommendations for safer ways to celebrate together in person. Remember, we know what our best tools are: wearing our masks, keeping our distance, limiting event sizes, washing your hands, and looking out for public health and each other."

If you think you could have COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, do not participate in any in-person Halloween activities.

#### **Trick-or-treating**

- Anyone participating in trick-or-treating, including those passing out candy, should maintain 6-feet of social distance and wear proper [face coverings](#).
- Consider leaving individually wrapped candy (spaced apart) on a table in driveways or in front of walkways, sidewalks, or any outdoor space where 6-feet of distance can be maintained.
- A Halloween costume mask is not a substitute for a cloth mask. Ensure that breathing is not impaired if a cloth mask is worn under a costume mask. If so, discard the costume mask.
- Trick-or-treat in groups with household members only.
- Candy collected during trick-or-treating should not be eaten until after handwashing.

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An alternative to traditional trick-or-treating is to set up in a large parking lot or other outdoor setting with tables with individually wrapped candy (spaced apart) where participants with a parent/guardian can parade past while still keeping 6-feet of distance and wearing a face covering. It's suggested to offer reserved time slots to limit everyone showing up at once.

### **Haunted Houses**

- Halloween haunted houses currently are not allowed in [Restore Illinois Phase 4 Guidelines](#).
- Consider open-air, one-way haunted forests or haunted walks where 6-feet of distance can be maintained and face coverings are used.

### **Adult costume parties, social gatherings, Halloween parties at bars**

- Gatherings of more than 50 people or 50% or more of a building's maximum occupancy are prohibited. (Lower limits may apply for regions in additional mitigation.)
- The more time you spend at a gathering, the closer the contact, the more people, the higher your risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Follow small social gathering safety tips from [IDPH](#).

### **Pumpkin patches and orchards**

- Cloth face coverings and social distancing should be enforced.
- Use hand sanitizer before handling pumpkins, apples, and other produce.

### **Hayrides**

- Hayrides should not exceed 50% capacity with parties spaced at least six feet apart.
- Wear face coverings at all times when around people not from your household.

After participating in any of the above activities, if you think that you may have been exposed during your celebration, take extra precautions for 14 days after the event to help protect others. You should:

- [Stay home](#) as much as possible.
- Avoid being around people at [increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#).
- Consider getting [tested](#) for COVID-19.

IDPH Halloween guidance can be found on the IDPH website.

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