



Public Health

Idaho North Central District



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LEWISTON, IDAHO – Public Health – Idaho North Central District (PH-INCD) recognizes the great value of tradition and celebration when it comes to holidays, like Halloween. However, as we look for ways to balance life amidst a pandemic, health and safety must be at the forefront. PH-INCD wants its communities to be aware that many traditional Halloween activities can be high-risk for spreading viruses. The safest celebrations are those that involve your household members, allow for consistent social distancing, are outdoors, include good hygiene practices, and follow all health and safety measures encouraged for COVID-19. For those who choose to celebrate Halloween, PH-INCD urges people to opt for low-risk activities, as outlined in this guidance for a safer Halloween celebration.

If you do not feel well, have a respiratory or gastrointestinal illness, or 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.

Lower-Risk Activities

- Carving or decorating pumpkins indoors with members of your household or outdoors, at a safe distance, with neighbors or friends. Display for all to enjoy!
- Decorating your house, apartment or living space.
- Having a scavenger hunt in and around your house or throughout neighborhood while distancing.
- Having a virtual costume contest or party.
- Enjoying a movie night with people you live with.
- Making a pinata and filling it with candy for your kids to swing at (maybe they'll let you swing, too!).
- Making and decorating spooky treats/sweets.

Moderate-Risk Activities

- Participating in one-way trick-or-treating where individually wrapped goodie bags are lined up for families to grab and go while continuing to physically distance (such as at the end of a driveway or edge of a yard).
- Going to an outdoor costume parade or party – small group.
- Going to an open-air, one-way, walk-through haunted forest or an outdoor Halloween movie night with local family friends. If screaming will likely occur, greater distancing is advised.
- Visiting pumpkin patches or orchards.

Higher-Risk Activities – AVOID!

- Avoid these activities to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19:
- Traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children who go door to door.
- Trunk-or-treat where treats are handed out from trunks of cars lined up in parking lots.
- Crowded costume parties held indoors.
- Indoor haunted house where people may be crowded together and screaming.
- Hayrides or tractor rides with people who are not in your household.
- Using alcohol or drugs, which can cloud judgement and increase risky behaviors.
- Traveling to a fall festival outside your community if you live in an area with community spread of COVID-19.

While trick-or-treating falls under a high-risk activity, which is not recommended in communities with widespread COVID-19 transmission, if you are opting to trick-or-treat, or hand out treats, please consider the following:

Making Trick-or-Treating Safer

- Choose neighborhoods or environments that are not crowded and allow for proper social distancing of staying six feet apart. If you can't keep physical distance, it's best to avoid activities like trick-or-treating or going to a crowded pumpkin patch.
- Do not open and eat candy along the way; wait until you get home and have properly washed your hands.
- Everyone should wash their hands well with soap and warm water upon returning home.
- Avoid touching or removing face coverings/masks while out.
- If you are handing out treats, understand the level of risk you're willing to take. Packaged food is not considered a common source of coronavirus exposure, but it's not without risk. If you put out a bowl of candy, a larger number of people will touch the bowl and candy. If you hand out candy out individually, fewer people touch the candy, but they come into closer contact with one another, especially if children line up outside the door. It's close contact with others that creates the greater risk of COVID spread.
- Reduce risk in how you hand out treats. Options to reduce (but not eliminate) risk include:
 - Use tape to mark waiting spots 6 feet apart on the way up to your door.
 - Use fun ways to give the candy while staying 6 feet apart, like slide the candy down a wrapping paper tube into their trick-or-treat bags. Or individually wrap goodie bags and line them up for families to grab and go while staying social distanced (such as at the end of a driveway or at the edge of a yard).
 - When you answer the door for trick-or-treaters, wear a cloth face covering/mask.
 - Wear masks that snugly cover the nose and mouth as part of the Halloween costume.
 - Kids can decorate cloth face coverings with fabric markers or embellishments to go with their costumes! Avoid plastic masks with holes—commercial costume masks won't provide the same level of protection unless they are made of two or more layers of breathable fabric that fit with no gaps around the face. Make sure kids wear their masks while trick-or-treating.

For more information please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html#halloween>