NJ Health
New Jersey Department of Health

Halloween 2020 Celebration Guidance
October 5, 2020

Traditional Halloween celebrations often involve crowds, close contact between individuals, and activities in closed spaces. It is important to plan early and identify safer alternatives for celebrating the fall season. Outdoor activities, as opposed to indoor parties and events, are recommended. Those planning celebrations or participating in Halloween activities should keep in mind public health recommendations of social and physical distancing, wearing masks that cover the nose and mouth, and hand hygiene. Costume masks are not an acceptable substitute for cloth or disposable masks. Individuals should minimize interaction and contact with others who are not a part of their household.

As a reminder, no one should participate in these activities if they or a household member have a known exposure to COVID-19, are sick/symptomatic, or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and has not yet met the criteria for discontinuing isolation.

This year, as New Jersey continues to respond to ongoing transmission of COVID-19 in our communities, recommendations for adapting traditional celebrations and considerations for ways to celebrate Halloween safely are listed below. Some communities may choose to cancel Halloween activities, so check with local sources before making plans.

1. **Outdoor Door to Door Trick or Treating**
    a. **Those who plan to trick-or-treat** should limit their groups to current household members, consider staying local, and limit the number of houses on their route. Social distancing should be practiced between all who are not in the same household.
    b. **For those putting out treats:**
        i. **Good** option: Limit interaction or contact with trick-or-treaters, wear a mask when individuals come to the door, and regularly wash hands.
        ii. **Better** option: Leave a treat bowl on a porch or table or in a place where it may be easily accessed while adhering to social distancing requirements.
        iii. **Best** option: Arrange individually packaged candy so that trick or treaters can grab and go without accessing a shared bowl.
    c. Consider coordinating with neighbors to develop a system, such as signs or on/off porch lights, for distinguishing houses participating in trick-or-treating from those that do not wish to participate.
    d. Wear a face mask to mitigate against COVID-19 exposure. Costume masks are not an acceptable substitute but can be supplemented with a cloth or disposable mask. Children under two should not wear a cloth mask.
    e. Candy should be commercially packaged and non-perishable. Consider individual non-food "treats" to avoid sharing of food.
    f. Practice hand hygiene (wash hands or use hand sanitizer) before leaving your home, after touching objects such as wrapped candy, and when arriving home.

2. **Outdoor Trunk or Treating** (when children go car to car instead of house to house)
    a. Limit the number of participating cars to ensure adequate space for social distancing and minimize crowds. Ensure outdoor area has sufficient space per car to avoid overcrowding and to allow adequate space for social distancing.
    b. Follow the outdoor gatherings limitations in effect at the time.
    c. Design event in a long line, rather than a circle to ensure social and physical distancing to discourage crowding.
    d. Consider having assigned times or multiple shifts to minimize crowding during event.
    e. Wear a face mask. Costume masks are not an acceptable substitute but can be supplemented with a cloth or disposable mask. Children under two should not wear a cloth mask.
    f. Candy should be commercially packaged and non-perishable.
    g. Practice hand hygiene before the event, after touching objects such as wrapped candy, and after the event.

3. **Halloween Parties**
    a. Avoid large indoor or outdoor parties, which would be subject to the limitations currently in effect on indoor and outdoor gatherings.
    b. Keep up to date with the most current restrictions on outdoor and indoor gatherings.
    c. Avoid participation in activities that require close contact and/or shared items such as bobbing for apples

4. **Haunted houses, hayrides, and corn mazes**
    a. Wear a cloth or disposable mask while participating in these activities. As noted above, a costume mask does not suffice.
    b. Indoor haunted houses should be avoided because of the possibility of congregation and screaming in close quarters. If hosting a haunted house, ensure visitors maintain an appropriate distance by staggering start times and limiting occupancy. A better option would be to host an outdoor haunted house without live performers.
    c. Hayrides should limit the number of passengers per ride and keep openings to the same party. Any shared materials should be cleaned and sanitized after each use.
    d. Corn mazes should only permit individuals to proceed in one direction, should limit occupancy according to the applicable restrictions in effect at the time, and should avoid use of shared materials.
    e. Entities hosting these events are encouraged to take reservations and/or sell tickets in advance.

5. **Examples of socially distant Halloween activities that would require minimal or no additional health and safety protocols include:**
    a. Virtual activities such as online costume parties.
    b. Drive through events where individuals remain in their vehicles and drive through an area/neighborhood with Halloween displays.
    c. Carving pumpkins with family.
    d. Dressing up homes and yards with Halloween themed decorations.
    e. Halloween themed movie nights with family