

PRESS RELEASE



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HEALTH DEPARTMENT RELEASES HALLOWEEN GUIDANCE, OFFERS TIPS FOR SAFER ACTIVITIES

Health Officer recommends avoiding traditional trick-or-treating; indoor haunted houses not allowed in the County

Largo, MD – Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential for virus transmission associated with some Halloween activities, the Prince George's County Health Department is not allowing indoor haunted houses and does **NOT** recommend traditional door-to-door trick-or-treating this year. If you choose to trick-or-treat, you can reduce the transmission risk by staying with members of your household and closely following health and safety guidelines.

“To avoid the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses, it's very important to remain at least 6 feet away from others, wear face coverings, avoid large gatherings, and maintain good hand hygiene,” said **Prince George's County Health Officer Dr. Ernest Carter**. “Closely following the guidelines Prince Georgians have so far done a good job adhering to will give our communities the best chance to have a safe and healthy Halloween.”

And clearly, if you have COVID-19, or you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you absolutely should not participate in in-person Halloween festivities and should not give out candy to trick-or-treaters.

The Health Department also recommends practicing these additional Halloween COVID-related safety tips:

- Consider Halloween-themed cloth face coverings instead of costume masks. Costume masks have mouth and nose holes and when worn alone do not provide the same protection as face coverings. Do not share masks, fangs, or similar items.
Note: Costume masks on top of cloth masks can be dangerous and limit breathing.
- Bring alcohol-based hand sanitizer when trick-or-treating.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth, as germs can spread that way.
- Candy should be given out using a scoop or tongs so the candy is not directly handled. Children should not reach into candy bowls or bags.
- Consider providing individually wrapped goodie bags on a table at the edge of the driveway or yard. When preparing and handing out treats, be sure to follow proper hand hygiene.
- Avoid parties and party games like bobbing for apples or other activities that might involve sharing items that come into contact with other people's mouths or noses.
- When returning home with treats, children should wash hands properly with soap and water before eating anything.

High-Risk Halloween Activities NOT ALLOWED this year in Prince George's County:

- Indoor haunted houses (people will likely be crowded together in dark rooms and screaming)

High-Risk Halloween Activities NOT RECOMMENDED this year in Prince George's County include:

- Traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed out to children who go door to door
- Traditional trunk-or-treats should be shifted instead to one-way, drive-thru distributions for candy, and residents are encouraged to attend those sponsored by County Government or municipal governments.
- Large street parties or festivals are discouraged.

- Hay rides

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) consider the following to be low- and medium-risk Halloween activities:

Low Risk

- Pumpkin carving or decorating with members of your household, or outdoors with neighbors and friends
- Decorating the inside and outside of your home
- Indoor scavenger hunt for household members
- Outdoor 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
- Virtual Halloween costume contest
- Halloween movie night with household members

Medium Risk

- Halloween movie night outdoors with local family and friends
- Open-air, one-way haunted forest
- Visiting a pumpkin patch or orchard where hand sanitizer use is required before touching pumpkins or apples

For more information about COVID-related Halloween health and safety guidance, please visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

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