



## NJFC TRICK-OR-TREAT GUIDELINES DURING COVID-19

With the appropriate guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New Jersey Department of Health, we can prioritize safety and public health while at the same time allowing New Jersey families to celebrate Halloween. The approach outlined below provides practical steps and ideas to follow that allow Halloween to be celebrated safely while still having fun. The key is to start planning now.

COVID-19 has overwhelmed almost every aspect of our lives. As hard as it has been for adults, arguably it has been harder for our children, both mentally and physically. Halloween is one of the biggest events of the year for families. At a time when nothing seems to be normal because of COVID-19, parents desperately want something to be fun and relatively normal for their kids. The more appropriate question is not whether to celebrate Halloween, but how can we make it as safe as possible for everyone? What follows are a few ideas to help make this possible:

1. Brush up on guidance from federal, state, and local health officials. It is important to know what's right for your community.
2. Halloween is traditionally an outdoor holiday and social distancing while trick-or-treating is not drastically different than how Halloween is normally observed. Ensure you and your children always maintain appropriate social distancing of six feet or more. Adults should accompany young children and ensure they are respecting distancing rules.
3. Halloween is also the one time of the year where kids want to wear a mask. This is the year to get creative with face coverings. Work with your child to think of ways to integrate clever, while still protective, face coverings into their Halloween costume. Make sure children can see well while wearing their masks and securely fasten the mask so it does not fall off.
4. Consider holding a small outdoor gathering such as a Trunk-or-Treat with required physical distancing in the yard or elsewhere in the neighborhood. Even a small parade can be held safely outdoors if six feet of physical distancing is maintained at all times. *This is **not** the year to buck tradition by holding large indoor events, including parties.*

5. Trick-or-treating can safely be done at households you know and can alert ahead of time so that adequate distancing is practiced. Your child gets to show off their costume to neighbors, relatives, and friends. And the treats can even be placed outside beforehand so your child doesn't need to come in direct contact with the people inside.
6. Although there is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted by food or food packaging, personal hygiene is still important during Halloween. Bring hand sanitizer if attending an outdoor event or going trick-or-treating. Use it frequently to keep your child's hands clean, including before opening a package.
7. This year, it's more important than ever that any treats you distribute or your child receives are **only** wrapped and packaged and **not** loose or open. Wait until arriving home to consume your candy to prevent removing your mask and reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure. Examine all candy before allowing children to eat it.
8. If you venture out on Halloween night, bring along an extra package of disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizer, and masks for added peace of mind.
9. Go out in daylight and carry a flashlight for when it gets dark. Everyone will be celebrating differently according to their comfort level, so expect some doors may not be open to trick-or-treaters. It may be advisable to stay within the neighborhood and only visit homes you know.
10. If you decide trick-or-treating is not the right choice for your family, explore [other options](#) for celebrating the Halloween season in the days leading up to October 31, like throwing a virtual costume party or curling up with a spooky movie.

*Guidelines attributed to Dr. Stephen Ostroff who served as the FDA's deputy commissioner and chief scientist and as the deputy director of the National Center for Infectious Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Ostroff is working with the National Confectioners Association to help Americans take the guesswork out of Halloween. More information is available at [AlwaysATreat.com/HalloweenCentral](https://www.alwaysatreat.com/halloweencentral).*

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