

# Media Release



## Halloween Guidelines during COVID-19 October 26, 2020 - For immediate release

With Halloween fast approaching, Timiskaming Health Unit is reminding everyone to take steps to celebrate in a COVID-safe way. Whether pumpkin carving, showcasing a costume, or trick-or-treating, simple actions to modify our Halloween activities can help limit the spread of [COVID-19](#) and leave the scaring to the monsters!

Dr. Glenn Corneil, Acting Medical Officer of Health with the Timiskaming Health Unit said, "While we are still navigating our first Halloween in a global pandemic, I think we can all agree that we want everyone to be safe. If you do choose to trick or treat you must take extra precautions, or this year why not get creative and consider alternatives to traditional celebrations ([Halloween Ideas Beyond Trick-or-Treating](#))."

Public Health will continue to consider [provincial direction](#) and the local context of COVID-19 in the days to come. Although much can change between now and October 31, and evolving situations may require events to be postponed, cancelled, or limited, many of our traditional Halloween activities can be modified in a COVID-safe way. We encourage everyone to find ways to limit the spread of the virus and still have a happy Halloween with public health measures in place.

### Trick-or-treating

While it is safest to stay home, if you choose to go door-to-door or hand out treats at home, take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Do not trick-or-treat or hand out treats if you are sick.
- Only trick-or-treat with members of your household.
- Trick-or-treat outside and keep distance from people outside your household.
- Wear a face covering when going door-to-door or handing out candy. Remember, a costume mask is not a substitute for a face covering.
- Do not congregate or linger at doorsteps. Stand two metres apart if waiting.
- Stay near your door when handing out candy so ghosts and goblins can avoid high-touch surfaces and objects like door handles and doorbells.
- Do not leave treats in a bucket or bowl for everyone to grab. Consider using tongs, long spoons, or other similar tools to hand out treats, or set up a table with pre-bagged treats to keep distance from trick-or-treaters.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Respect people by staying away from homes if the lights are out.
- Consider printing a [poster](#) to help let your neighbours know if you are handing out treats.

### Gatherings

Limiting contacts and in-person interactions reduces the risk of spreading COVID-19. While non-essential gathering should be limited, if you choose to host or attend a Halloween gathering, keep in mind the following tips:

- Limit close contact to members of your household.

- Keep gatherings small. Although private gatherings of up to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors are allowed under provincial legislation, non-essential gatherings of any size should be limited. Stick with members of your household for indoor activities.
- Keep two metres distance between people outside of your household and wear a face covering if distancing is not possible.
- Do not attend a gathering if you have any symptoms or if you are self-isolating.
- Keep a guest list in case it is needed for contact tracing.
- If food or drinks are served:
  - Avoid buffet-style food service and plan how to physically distance while distributing and cleaning up food.
  - Serve food on individual plates to prevent guests from passing and touching the same objects.
  - Have everyone wash their hands before and after eating.
- Consider participating in virtual events or not attending at all, especially if you are 70 years or older, are immunocompromised, or have underlying medical conditions.

As you make your plans, ask yourself how you can make the activity safer. Follow and use public health advice to help lower the risk of spreading COVID-19 this Halloween. The choices we make now are critical to keep our schools, workplaces, and communities safe.

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For more information

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