

Tips for Lower Risk “Trick or Treating” During the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Be cognizant of transmission/positivity rates and levels of relative risk in the community before deciding to trick or treat. Assess your personal COVID-19 risk. Assess and discuss COVID-19 risk for those you live with. Stay home if you are sick.
- Bring hand sanitizer.
- Best to trick or treat with people in your household. Do not go with friends who are outside your household or pandemic pod. Wear a recommended mask and keep 6 feet away from others outside your household.
- Stay outside, do not attend indoor parties or haunted houses. If it rains, gear up or postpone until next year.
- Don't travel to distant neighborhoods (the ones who give out the big candy bars) for trick or treating. Stay in your own neighborhood around the people you are likely around most to reduce spread of the virus.
- Wear a multi layered, recommended face covering or mask. A child's costume mask is not a substitution for a recommended multilayer cloth face covering with ear loops or a tie. A costume mask should not be used unless it is made of two or more layers of breathable fabric that covers the mouth and nose and doesn't leave gaps around the face. Do not wear a costume mask over a protective cloth mask because it can be dangerous if the costume mask makes it hard to breathe. Instead, consider using a Halloween-themed cloth mask.
- If the costume calls for or comes with gloves, best to opt out and carry sanitizer instead. Gloves can transmit virus from one surface to another and to your face. Use sanitizer as you move from location to location.
- Provide/eat factory wrapped candy only. Candy givers should wash hands before and after handling wrapped candy or preparing bags full of wrapped candy. You can wash the outside of the wrapper with soap and water before consuming.
- If you're uneasy about your kids getting candy from others, you can get dressed up and walk around to visit homes, but you provide your kids with the candy at each stop. This would reduce the potential transmission of virus on wrappers.
- You and your kids should get a flu shot a couple of weeks before Halloween. Every prevented case of flu saves valuable healthcare resources to use for those who contract COVID-19, a virus for which there is not currently a vaccine.
- Candy givers should place wrapped candy in individual pieces or in goodie bags on the porch or a table for kids to grab. Do not allow trick or treaters to grab candy from a common bowl where they might dig around for the perfect piece. As an outdoor candy giver, stay 6 feet away from the trick or treaters, if you're not in a vulnerable population. Otherwise, stay indoors.
- Think about making sure your storm door is installed before Halloween so you can stay behind the glass as kids approach, direct them to take placed/bagged candy and still enjoy viewing the costumes while not exposing yourself to the little visitors. This tip is especially important for folks in vulnerable populations (over 65 and those with compromised immune systems).
- While it's good practice for trick or treaters and their caregivers to have hand sanitizer with them while trick or treating, candy givers can also put out a pump bottle for use by visitors.
- For candy givers – if you don't want to participate, keep your porch light off and post a “See you next year” sign indicating that you are passing on giving out candy this year due to the pandemic and ask people not to stop at your house.

For further guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), please navigate to <https://www.mass.gov/news/halloween-during-covid-19>