



Halloween FAQs

Q: Can kids trick-or-treat this Halloween?

Yes, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) knows how fun Halloween can be for everyone. With planning and caution, this traditional activity presents a low risk to those who participate. To keep everyone safe from COVID-19, go trick-or-treating in small groups, maintain six feet of distance from those not from the same household, wear a face covering, avoid crowds and don't gather indoors.

Q: Do Halloween costume masks protect from virus transmission and exposure?

No, traditional commercial Halloween masks that are part of a costume **do not** protect you or others against the COVID-19 virus. Plan a costume that allows a trick-or-treater to wear a COVID-safe [face covering](#), but remember it's not safe to wear a face covering under a Halloween mask.

Q: Since we will be going door to door outside for trick-or-treating, do kids need to wear face coverings?

If you are in a crowd, or in close contact with people from other households while walking, knocking on doors and collecting candy, you should wear a face covering. That includes children and adults. A COVID-safe face covering offers a layer of protection, especially for unvaccinated children.

Q: It's okay for kids to sneak a little bit of candy before returning home, right?

While it's tempting, that's not the best idea. Everyone should avoid touching their face until after they have washed their hands, especially hands that have been scooping candy from bowls touched by many other hands. Kids should wash or sanitize their hands before eating candy. And please discard candy if the wrapper is torn.

Q: Is it a good idea to gather indoors with friends and family before or after trick-or-treating?

It is best to **avoid** indoor gatherings with those from other households unless all household members are vaccinated. If you do meet indoors, try to gather with vaccinated people and make sure to wear a face covering, keep your distance, open windows for ventilation and have a HEPA filter or fan running. Kids younger than 12 are not yet eligible to be vaccinated, so plan to gather with trick-or-treating friends outside.

Q: What precautions should someone handing out candy take?

If you are handing out candy, there are a few simple things you can do to protect yourself and the astronauts and ghouls who knock on your door. It's a great idea to wear a face covering because you'll be in contact with a lot of children and adults outside your household. You can also stand outside in the fresh air and you might consider putting treats in baggies and handing them out instead of having kids plunge their hands into a bowl.

Q: What is the best way to stay safe trick-or-treating with the Delta variant circulating?

Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is the safest and most effective way to protect you, your family and everyone in your community from getting sick with COVID-19. Although fewer children have been sick compared to adults, children can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, can get sick and can spread the virus to others.

Everyone 12 years and older is eligible for vaccination. For more information on vaccines, visit <http://getvaccinated.oregon.gov/#/>.

Q: Is there additional guidance for kids younger than 12 who cannot get vaccinated yet?

This is a happy activity and tradition for kids, so let's all do our part to make it safe against COVID-19:

- Kids and adults should wear face coverings.
- Don't gather indoors with people from another household and avoid crowds.
- If you must be indoors, maximize ventilation by opening a window and running a fan or air purifier.
- Everyone should wash their hands before diving into the candy.

Q: Can people who are immunocompromised or are at a high risk for severe COVID-19 illness hand out candy?

- A booster dose of Pfizer is recommended for people 65 and older and people 50-64 with [underlying medical conditions](#).
- Those vaccinated with Pfizer who are 18 to 64 years old may get the booster if they have an underlying medical condition and are at a higher risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission due to occupational or institutional setting.
- Please wear a mask if you join a trick-or-treating group or hand out candy.

Q: Should I be concerned that it's flu season?

The biggest driver of flu transmission is school-age children, so now is a great time to get the flu shot. The flu vaccine is available to everyone who is at least six months old.

For those 12 and older, the flu shot can be given at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccine.

For more information on how to protect yourself from the flu, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/faq-flu-season-2021-2022.htm#Flu-Vaccine>

Q: What do the teal pumpkins I see represent?

The Teal Pumpkin Project helps to make trick-or-treating safer and more inclusive for the one in 13 children living with food allergies. By placing a teal pumpkin on the porch or front steps, you are letting kids and their adults know that you are offering non-food trinkets and treats that are safe for everyone. To learn more, visit the [Teal Pumpkin Project](#).

General Halloween safety

Q: Should kids be allowed to trick-or-treat without an adult?

Adults know their kids best, but for general safety children younger than 12 should be accompanied by an adult when trick-or-treating.

Q: What kind of costumes should be avoided?

Halloween masks that can limit children’s vision are not a good idea, plus they do not protect from transmitting or being exposed to COVID-19. Face paint is a better choice than a full-face mask. Also, be sure that costumes fit well to prevent tripping and falling.

Q: What extra precautions can parents take for kids walking in high-traffic areas?

Make yourself seen!

- Carry flashlights or glowsticks.
- Wear glowing bracelets or necklaces.
- Put reflective tape on costumes, shoes and trick-or-treat bags to make kids more visible to drivers.

Remind kids to cross the street at corners and crosswalks and always look both ways before crossing the street.

Q: What can drivers do to make Halloween safer for trick-or-treaters?

Slow down and be alert! Remember kids are excited and may not look both ways before crossing the street. It’s a good day to turn on your headlights early so trick-or-treaters can see you and you can spot them from a greater distance.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has [more tips for safe trick-or-treating here](#).

Document accessibility: For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact the COVID-19 Communications Unit at 1-971-673-2411, 711 TTY or COVID19.LanguageAccess@dhsosha.state.or.us.