

# **Illinois Department Of Public Health Issues Updated COVID-19 Halloween And Fall Festivities Guidance**

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**SPRINGFIELD** – As we continue through Fall and head into the holiday season, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is issuing updated guidance to help people celebrate more safely as we continue to battle COVID-19.

“Although we’re still in the pandemic, this Halloween and Fall festivities season will look a little different than last year thanks to the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines that are readily available,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “However, we must still take precautions as not everyone is vaccinated and a vaccine for children younger than 12 years is not yet available. Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself, your friends and family, and your community, but it’s also important to use a layered approach by wearing a mask indoors and limiting/avoiding settings where physical distancing is not possible to help stop the spread of the virus.”

## **MASKS**

Masks are currently required, per [Executive Order](#), in all indoor public locations in Illinois. A costume mask is NOT a substitute for a well-fitting [mask to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#). Wearing a costume mask over a face covering to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is not recommended because it could make breathing more difficult. Safer options include choosing a costume that does not come with a costume mask, or find a costume that incorporates a face covering.

## **TRICK-OR-TREAT**

Trick-or-treating outdoors in small groups is best, but if outdoors is not an option, there are steps people can take to make indoor trick-or-treating safer. Those handing out tricks or treats indoors should open doors and windows as much as possible to promote increased ventilation and wear a mask. It is also important for everyone handing out or receiving treats to wash their hands.

Alternatives to door-to-door trick-or-treating can include setting up tables in a parking lot or other safe outdoor area where individually wrapped treats can be set out or holding an outdoor costume parade for kids along with a parent/guardian.

## **HAUNTED HOUSES, WOODS, WALKS**

Open-air haunted houses are safer than enclosed haunted houses. Masks are required to be worn in indoor haunted houses and the number of people should be limited to reduce crowding. Other options include visiting outdoor haunted woods or going on a haunted walk.

## **PUMPKIN PATCHES, ORCHARD VISITS, FALL FESTIVALS**

Try to visit pumpkin patches, orchards, and festivals at times that aren’t as busy. You can also limit your exposure by moving away from crowded areas and wearing a mask.

## **HALLOWEEN PARTIES AND SOCIAL GATHERINGS**

Large gatherings with more people increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission compared to small gatherings, and outdoor parties are safer than indoor parties. If indoors, masks must be worn in public places, but can also be worn in private settings where physical distancing is difficult. For indoor gatherings, try to increase airflow by opening doors and windows.

## **DÍA LOS MUERTOS**

Holding events and activities outdoors to honor deceased loved ones for Día de los Muertos is safer than indoors. If gathering indoor, increase airflow by opening windows and try to physically distance as much as possible. Another option to celebrate and remember deceased loved ones is to exchange traditional family recipes with family or neighbors that they can make at home.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, do not participate in any Halloween or Fall events.

More information on Halloween and Fall Guidance is on the IDPH website at <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/Halloween>.