

## COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Fall/Halloween Activities

A safe Halloween during the COVID-19 pandemic may look and feel a little different as people decide how they will celebrate – whether it's having fun from a distance, trick-or-treating, enjoying Halloween at home or something in between. Sacramento County Public Health would like to share information about ways to celebrate the holiday and reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

### Background

On June 15, 2021, California reopened the economy and lifted restrictions on almost all businesses and activities. However, COVID-19 is still causing illness and hospitalizations in Sacramento County. Variants of COVID-19 continue to pose a significant risk. [Vaccinations](#), sanitation measures and [face masks](#) have helped reduce the spread of COVID-19, but everyone needs to remain vigilant.

[COVID-19](#) is a respiratory illness that is usually spread through the air via respiratory droplets from an infected person. The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. The basic [COVID-19 prevention measures](#) are still important for helping reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Wash hands often, and use hand sanitizer when hand washing is not an option
- Stay home when sick
- Wear a face mask
- Clean and disinfect high contact surfaces often

***Please Note:*** [\*\*\*In Sacramento County, masks are required to be worn in all indoor public settings.\*\*\*](#)

### Many options: Evaluate your risk, choose what's best for your family

Fall is here and there are many fun activities coming up, including Halloween. If you have a family member that is at high risk for getting severely ill from COVID-19, you might consider choosing low risk activities and skipping some events all together. If your family decides to participate, please remember to follow basic COVID-19 prevention measures.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends thinking about what steps you need to take to [protect yourself and your loved ones](#) from COVID-19.

- If you are not fully vaccinated and aged 2 or older, you should wear a mask in indoor public places.
- In general, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings.
  - In areas with [high numbers of COVID-19 cases](#), consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated.
- If you are fully vaccinated, see [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated](#).

### Trick or Treat Activities

Trick or treating is one of the most exciting parts of the Halloween celebration. The following suggestions should be considered to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### **Passing out candy**

- Wash hands before and after handling candy.
- Avoid passing out candy from inside of your home; give out candy from the porch or driveway instead of from the front door
- Wear a face mask
- Only give away commercially packaged candy
- Place a table between the person handing out candy and the trick or treaters to help with distancing
- Make a variety of treat bags with commercially packaged candy and hang from streamers in the yard
- Place a bowl or container of candy at the end of the driveway or walkway with some hand sanitizer and watch from the porch
- Spread out candy on a table to be picked up by trick or treaters.

### **Going out to Trick or Treat**

- Wear a face mask (*face masks are currently required when at indoor public settings, unless exempt*);
  - Allow your child to select their own face mask
  - Decorate a face mask together to match your child's costume
  - Ensure the wearer can still see out of the costume and there are no vision or trip hazards
  - Don't wear a costume that prohibits you from wearing a face mask
- Maintain 6 feet distance from others and from different households
  - Travel together with your household members as a small group
  - Try to keep social interactions with other groups outdoors
- Practice good hygiene
  - Have hand sanitizer available and use often
  - Avoid touching your face
  - Don't share costume props such as masks, toy weapons, etc.
  - Don't share food
- If you or your family members are sick, or have been in contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19, stay home and away from others
- Follow general trick-or-treating safety measures:
  - Adults should accompany children
  - Review rules with children before trick-or-treating
  - Consider limiting trick or treating to your immediate neighborhood
  - Ask your child to pick one candy. Don't touch multiple candies.
  - Do not eat candy until you have returned home and have washed hands
  - Have an adult inspect the candy before eating
  - Only eat candy packaged in the original wrapper
  - Bring a flashlight
  - Wear light-colored clothing and consider adding reflective tape

- Watch out for traffic, walk on sidewalks
- Keep costumed children away from pets, as pets might not recognize the child and become frightened

### **Alternatives to Trick-or-Treating**

Celebrate creatively this year! If your family decides to limit their risk, here are some fun ideas:

- Have a Halloween watch party at home. Watch parties can use online video and chat options so attendees can interact with each other
- Watch a Halloween movie at a drive-in theater
- Hold a virtual costume party. Have a contest to “make your own costume” using items in the room
- Do a project such as pumpkin carving/painting, mask decorating, and window/house decorating
- Have a candy scavenger hunt in the house or yard
- Reverse trick-or-treat - Drop small gift bags of commercially packaged candy on your neighbor’s porch instead

### **Mega Events**

Mega Events are defined as events drawing greater than 1,000 (indoors) and 10,000 (outdoors) attendees. CDPH has issued guidelines for Mega Events. For further information, please refer to [CDPH Beyond the Blueprint Guidance](#).

- Vaccination verification or negative test result is required for **Indoor Mega Events**. Testing must be conducted within 72 hours before event start time (both PCR and antigen tests are acceptable). Results of the test must be available prior to entry into the event or venue.
  - Self-attestation may not be used to verify status as fully vaccinated or as proof of negative test result for indoor settings.
- Vaccination verification or negative test result is recommended for **Outdoor Mega Events**. Testing must be conducted within 72 hours before event start time (both PCR and antigen tests are acceptable). Results of the test must be available prior to entry into the event or venue.
  - For outdoor settings, it is recommended not to use self-attestation to verify status as fully vaccinated or as proof of negative test result.
- Information shall be prominently placed on all communications, including the reservation and ticketing systems, to ensure guests are aware of testing and vaccination requirements (including acceptable modes of verification).
- Attendees must follow [CDPH Guidance for Face Coverings](#).
- Venues should make masks available to attendees upon request.

### **Other Fall Activities – COVID-19 Safety Tips**

#### **Dia de los Muertos**

- Spend time with people of the same household or to celebrate virtually.
- Consider placing and creating the altar in a front window or outside so others can view.

- Create a virtual space to honor lost loved ones. Share with family and friends via email or social media.
- If planning to visit the cemetery, consider visiting only with people of the same household. Wear a face covering and limit time spent to minimum necessary.

### **Pumpkin Patches**

Many pumpkin patches have a variety of activities and have the benefit of having a lot of space and being outdoors. Some tips to help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Bring hand sanitizer and use it often
- Bring a blanket or chairs rather than using the dining area, in case it is crowded
- Plan your trip for a time when it will not be busy
- Avoid crowded attractions (especially if they are indoors)

### **Haunted Houses**

Indoor haunted houses have a much higher risk of COVID transmission than an outdoor venue. Consider going to an outdoor venue such as a haunted corn maze, haunted hay ride or scream park.

- Wear a mask indoors and outdoors. Screaming will happen and can spread respiratory illnesses like COVID-19. To protect yourself and those around you, wear a mask.
- Stay home if you don't feel well.

### **Parties and other Social Gatherings**

If you are planning a party, please consider the following to help limit the spread of COVID-19:

- Keep the gathering outdoors. Consider using your garage with the garage door open. If indoors, open all the windows.
- Set out food and drinks in individual servings, rather than "buffet style"
- Request that people who attend are vaccinated or have a recent negative COVID-19 test
- Keep sinks stocked with soap and paper towels for handwashing
- Provide hand sanitizer in multiple locations

### **Resources**

[Sacramento County COVID-19 Updates](#)

[Sacramento County Vaccination Information](#)

[Center for Disease Control: Events and Gatherings](#)

[Center for Disease Control: Guide to Masks](#)

Document was prepared by Sacramento County's [Environmental Management Department](#)

**Summary of Revisions**

**9/17/2020:** Initial version

**10/9/2020:** Added wording to stay in own neighborhood this year, not to travel to trick-or-treat.

**10/14/2020:** Added safer alternatives for Dia de los Muertos and updated requirements for private gatherings. Added updated guidance for private events and gatherings.

**9/13/21:** Updated for 2021

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