**Be safe and stay healthy this Halloween to slow the spread of COVID-19. Remember that large gatherings and close contact with people outside of your household increase your risk. So, this year, find new ways to celebrate that don’t involve big in-person parties or traditional trick-or-treating.**

**Events to Avoid**

The Department of Health Services (DHS) recommends the following events not take place this year:

* Large outdoor gatherings such as parties, festivals, and parades.
  + Even though being outside decreases the risk, being in close contact with people you don’t live with increases the risk of spreading and contracting COVID-19.
* In-person indoor parties and celebrations.
  + In-person costume contests and parties are not recommended, no matter where they might be held.
* Happy hours or socializing at bars.
  + We’ve learned that going out to the bars helps the virus spread quickly.
* Traditional trick-or-treating from neighbor to neighbor.
  + Going house-to-house and having in-person contact is not recommended.

**Ideas for Celebrating More Safely**

You can still enjoy the holiday. Just celebrate with fewer people in-person and/or more people online.

* Hold virtual costume contests and parties. Dress up. Get online with friends and other families to celebrate and rate each other’s costumes.
* Increase what you do at home to celebrate. Decorate where you live. Get the kids involved in making decorations. Bake Halloween-themed treats. Watch scary movies with your family, household, or as a group online.
* If your community hosts trick-or-treating this year, do it more safely. Leave individual grab bags (or paper cups) filled with goodies outside your door for children to take. If you can, watch and wave to trick-or-treaters through a window. Or, leave Halloween treats outside the door where friends and loved ones live for a contact-free way of celebrating.
* Instead of the usual close contact in a confined space, visit (or create!) a drive-through haunted house experience.

**Other Considerations**

* Stay local. Avoid the urge to attend events in another town – it can lead to greater spread of the virus.
* Think before you go. Use the DHS [individual decision tool](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/decision.htm) to assess what’s best for you and your family when it comes to celebrating this year.
* Get vaccinated against the flu. Consider getting the flu vaccine before Halloween to keep you healthier overall.
  + COVID-19 and flu viruses both cause respiratory illnesses that spread easily from person-to-person.
  + While the flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19, it can minimize your risk of getting sick or being hospitalized from the flu.

**Reducing Risk Wherever You Are**

* If you are experiencing any [symptoms of COVID-19](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/symptoms.htm), be sure to [get tested](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/testing.htm) and stay at home.
* Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
* Stay at least 6 feet away from people you don’t live with.
* Wear a cloth face covering whenever possible around people you don’t live with.
  + Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unable to remove the covering without help.
  + Be aware not everyone can safely wear a face covering due to medical conditions or trauma responses.
* Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are unavailable.
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
* Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash or sanitize your hands.
* Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.