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A safe Halloween during the COVID-19 pandemic will look and feel a little different this year 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. Santa Barbara County Public Health would like to share information on how to take part in this holiday in a manner that reduces the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Background

COVID-19, also known as the novel coronavirus, is a respiratory illness that is spread through the air via respiratory droplets from an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces. The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. It is thought that the virus may also spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose, mouth or eyes, causing infection. Therefore, personal prevention practices (such as [handwashing](#), [staying home when sick](#), [maintaining 6 feet of distance](#), and [wearing a face covering](#)) and environmental prevention practices (such as [cleaning and disinfecting](#)) are important ways to prevent the virus' spread.

Requirements may change. Please visit <https://publichealthsb.org/> regularly for updates.

This guidance is applicable in both commercial and residential areas.

Be Ready for Trick or Treaters:

When passing out candy, consider a plan for social distancing:

- Wash hands before and after handling candy.
- Do not pass candy out from inside of your home; have grab and go candy from the porch or driveway instead of from the front door. Provide tongs or grabber along with hand sanitizer so there is no touching of candies with hands.
- Wear a face covering
- Only provide commercially packaged candy
- Place a six-foot table lengthwise between the person providing the candy and the trick or treaters to help maintain 6 feet social distance
- Make a variety of treat bags with commercially packaged candy and hang from streamers in the yard and monitor to ensure social distancing
- Place a bowl or container of candy at the end of the driveway or walkway with some hand sanitizer and watch from the porch

Safety Practices

All of the guidelines for day-to-day prevention of the spread of COVID-19 are still in effect.

- Wear a [face covering correctly](#); even while outdoors
 - Allow your child to select their own safe face covering
 - Decorate a face covering together to match your child's costume
 - Don't wear a costume that prohibits you from wearing a face covering

- Maintain 6 feet social distance from others and from different households
 - Travel together with your household members as a small group
 - Keep interactions with others brief
- Practice good hygiene
 - Wash hands often
 - Have hand sanitizer available and use often
 - Don't touch your face
 - Don't share costume props such as swords, fake firearms, lightsabers, etc.
 - Don't share drinks or food
- If you are sick, have been in contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19 stay home and away from others
 - Symptoms include: cough, difficulty breathing, fever, etc.
 - Clean and disinfect high touch contact surfaces, refer to [List N: Disinfectant for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\)](#).
- Follow general trick-or-treating safety measures:
 - Adults should accompany children
 - Establish ground rules for social distancing and mask wearing with children before trick-or-treating
 - Limit the number of houses you visit and consider sticking to houses you know
 - Ask your child to pick one candy and stick with it. Don't touch multiple candies. If possible, bring your own tongs or a grabber with you and use it to pick up candies.
 - Wait until returning home to eat candy so that hands can be washed before eating
 - Have an adult inspect the candy before eating.
 - Only eat candy that is handed out in its original wrapper
 - Bring a flashlight
 - Wear light-colored clothing and consider adding reflective tape
 - Watch out for traffic
 - Keep costumed children away from pets, as pets might not recognize the child and become frightened
 - Be aware of and careful around open flame. Use electric or battery-operated candles or lights in jack-o-lanterns and decorations whenever possible

Events and Gatherings

Gatherings with individuals outside of your household are currently not allowed in Santa Barbara County. The county has been designated in the Red Tier, where virus transmission is substantial.

[The State of California](#) defines gatherings as meetings or other events that bring together persons from multiple households at the same time for a shared or group experience in a single room, space, or place such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, large conference room, meeting hall, or other indoor or outdoor space.

- The *more people* an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and COVID-19 spreading.
- The [higher the level of community transmission](#) in the area that the gathering is being held, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spreading during a gathering.

Celebrate creatively this year!

- Watch Halloween movies at home
 - Watch parties can use online video and chat options so attendees can interact with each other
- Halloween movie night at drive-in theaters
 - Must comply with State Guidance for Movie Theatres and Family Entertainment Centers

- Virtual costume party
 - Best costume contest
 - Make your own costume contest
- Virtual craft projects and contests
 - Pumpkin carving
 - Painting
 - Mask decorating contests
 - Home decorating contest
- Consider a candy scavenger hunt in the house or yard with your household
- Carve or decorate pumpkins with members of your household

Outdoor Alternatives to Trick-or-Treating

- Reverse trick-or-treat
 - Drop small gift bags of commercially packaged candy on your neighbor's porch instead
- Trunk or treat: for the purpose of distributing candy only; no other events are permitted.
 - Follow the Safety Practices listed above
 - Park cars at least 8 to 10 feet apart from each other
 - Do not cluster in groups
 - If lines form, maintain participants at least 6 feet apart
- Car parades that comply with [Drive-In Event Guidance](#) including:
 - Drive by events or contests where individuals dress up or decorate their vehicles and drive by judges that are appropriately physically distanced
 - Drive through events where individuals remain in their vehicles and drive through an area with Halloween displays
 - Drive through event where individuals can receive a treat bag (limited to commercially packaged treats) or take away item from an organizer while the participants remain in their vehicle
 - Children can stay in their yards in costume and neighbors will drive by
- Plan a social distanced costume parade.
 - Place treats where kids can pick them up along the parade route (daytime activity). Alternatively, provide a bag of treats at the end of the parade
 - Do not allow spectators or crowds to gather at these types of activities

Resources

[Statewide Industry Guidance](#)
[Center for Disease Control: Events and Gatherings](#)
<https://publichealthsbcc.org/>

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