

Renfrew County and District Health Unit

How to Safely Navigate Halloween During COVID-19

Background

Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) wants residents to be safe this Halloween. Due to the significant increase in COVID-19 case counts in Renfrew County and District (RCD), RCDHU is recommending that residents consider opting for safer alternatives.

RCDHU is strongly recommending the cancellation of traditional organized community/municipal Halloween events where unmonitored or private social gatherings occur. Gatherings, regardless of the size, put people at higher risk of getting COVID-19. Instead, RCDHU is encouraging Halloween parties or events to be hosted virtually, where residents can participate safely from home.

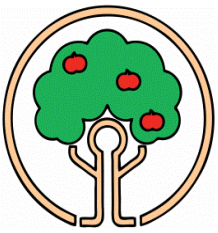
Note that these are the current guidelines and are subject to change pending further guidance from the local Medical Officer of Health and/or the province.

Celebrating virtually

- Celebrate in person with those who already live in your household or with your alternate household or chosen social support persons if you live alone. Avoid attending or hosting Halloween parties or gatherings with anyone outside your household.
- Launch a virtual competition with your neighbors for the best outdoor Halloween decorations.
- Organize a virtual costume party using video conferencing platforms with friends.

Celebrating within your household

- Save the pumpkin carving for Halloween night so you have another activity to look forward to.
- Plan a spooky evening looking at the full moon, which hasn't occurred on Halloween night for almost 20 years.
- Set up an at-home candy treasure hunt for your children, like Easter treat hunts.
- Enjoy preparing a fun and spooky meal with those you live with or with the alternate household if you live alone.
- Watch a scary movie with the people you live with or your alternate household if you live alone. There are plenty of Halloween movies that will get you in the spirit. Set up the show outside if the weather allows it.



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If you do choose to trick-or-treat

- Choose a costume that allows you/your child to wear a mask/face covering. A costume mask isn't a substitute for a mask/face covering and shouldn't be worn over a mask/face covering as it may make it difficult to breathe.
- **Only trick-or-treat outside**, and not indoors including in multi-unit residential buildings. Start earlier during daylight hours and stay in your local community and away from busier areas.
- Try to only go with members of your direct household. Youth 12 years of age or younger should consider trick-or-treating in groups of less than 6 with parental supervision. To limit high foot traffic, maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres from those outside your immediate household. Do not linger at doorsteps and consider standing back if waiting at someone's door.
- Where possible, knock instead of pushing doorbells.
- Bring hand sanitizer, and use it before handling candy, or after touching high-touch surfaces like doorbells, doors, or railings.

Everyone should complete Ontario's online [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) or the [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#), to monitor for symptoms and further guidance. Anyone who is in an at-risk group, who has COVID-19 symptoms, or who might have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, should immediately [self-isolate](#) and call the Renfrew County Virtual Triage Assessment Centre (RC VTAC) at 1-844-727-6404 to book an appointment for testing. **If you or your children have COVID-19 symptoms or are self-isolating, don't go out trick-or-treating and don't hand out treats.** Stay at home and turn off your porch light to discourage trick-or-treaters from coming to the door.

If you choose to hand out treats

- Keep at least 2 metres distance from trick-or-treaters and wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer.
- Ensure that a mask/face covering is worn if you cannot maintain physical distancing of 2 metres from anyone outside your household.
- Avoid leaving self-serve bowls of treats by making candy bundles/bags using prepackaged (not homemade) treats. Space them out on a table or blanket outside for trick-or-treaters to take, use tongs or find other creative ways to hand out treats while maintaining a distance.
- Consider alternate locations to hand out treats, such as setting up a table on your porch, front lawn or in your garage, and try placing markers on the ground to show trick-or-treaters where to stand while waiting (i.e. 2 metres from the table).