



Halloween traditions, including trick-or-treating, are important activities for mental and social wellbeing. Many of us look forward to participating in Halloween-themed special events or gatherings. Halloween may be different this year, but it can still be a lot of fun. Social circles in Ontario have been paused and it is strongly recommended that individuals maintain physical distance between themselves and people outside of their household. The following recommendations can provide some guidance on how you and your family and friends can safely celebrate Halloween during COVID-19. Ontario has provided information on [how to celebrate Halloween during COVID-19](#), depending on where you live in Ontario.

**Remember to stay at home and away from others if you are feeling ill or have symptoms of COVID-19.**

**Consider other ways to connect with family and friends outside of your household**

- Call or video chat with family and friends instead of in-person gatherings.
- Have an online costume party or celebration.
- Send a Halloween-themed letter or card.
- Arrange for contactless delivery of spooky crafts or tricks and treats with friends and family.

**Celebrating at Home**

- Make your own [spooky treats](#) like clementine jack-o-lanterns, monster mix, or ghostly cookies.

- Have kids help decorate, making a Halloween playlist, carving pumpkins, painting decorations, making paper chains and other crafts are great activities for different ages.
- Set up a scavenger hunt filled with tricks and treats inside or outdoors.
- Pick out some Halloween themed books to read together.

If you choose not to hand out treats this year, consider displaying this [See you next year](#) poster.

## **If you choose to participate in Trick or Treating:**

### At Home

- Set up a trick or treating station outside or just inside your garage or outside your door. Maintain a physical distance of 2 m from others, setting up a table can help with this. Portion treats out ahead of time to allow for touchless trick-or-treating. When trick-or-treaters arrive direct them to take a portion without handling any others.
  - Have non-food treats for children with allergies (visit [Food Allergy Canada](#) for more information on managing allergies at Halloween).
- Do not leave treats in a bucket or bowl for children to grab and consider using tongs or other similar tools to hand out treats.
- Clean and disinfect any frequently touched surfaces often.
- Wear a face covering if you are handing out candy.
- Consider displaying this [Welcome trick-or-treaters poster](#).

### Going Door-to-Door

- Only go out with members of your household.
- Only trick or treat outside.
- Try to maintain a physical distance from others while trick-or-treating. Do not congregate or linger at doorsteps and remember to line up two metres apart if waiting.
- Wear a face covering. Choose a costume that makes wearing a mask or face covering easy. Make sure your mask fits well and covers your nose, mouth, and

chin. A costume mask is not a substitute for a face covering and should not be worn over a face covering as it may make it difficult to breathe.

- Wash your hands before trick or treating, when you return home, and before snacking. Bring hand sanitizer with you.
- You may choose not to touch the treats collected immediately, consider waiting 2 days or longer. The longer the treats are left untouched, the safer they will be. Have some ready-to-enjoy favourites set aside for when you return home

## **Halloween Safety**

Remember the usual Halloween safety practices, dress for the weather conditions, wear reflectors, watch for traffic, and check over all treats before eating. For more safety tips, videos, and resources for parents, caregivers, and drivers visit [Parachute Canada](#) or [Health Canada](#). Health Canada also has information on [Halloween Food Safety](#) available on their website.

### **If you gather to celebrate:**

- If you choose to gather, limit the number of people.
- Follow provincial Orders on public and social gatherings that mandate the number of people who may gather. On September 19, 2020 unmonitored and private social gathering limits were reduced to 10 people for indoor gatherings and 25 people for outdoor gatherings.
  - Consider gathering outdoors instead of inside when possible.
  - Indoor gathering limits apply to events that are fully or partially indoors. Indoor events and gatherings cannot be combined with an outdoor event or gathering to increase the applicable gathering size.
- Individuals are required to maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres with people from outside their households.
  - Arrange the set up and seating of the event to support physical distancing.
- Wear a cloth mask if physical distancing is a challenge. Ensure that masks are worn as required by provincial and local regulations. Plan your costume so that you can comfortably wear a mask or face covering.

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Clean and disinfect shared items. Minimize shared items such as chairs.
- Have guests bring their own items, such as chairs or food to minimize sharing. Use caution if providing or sharing food. Buffet-style food is not recommended.
- Activities such as singing and dancing are higher-risk. Discourage activities that can contribute to the spread of COVID-19 such as cheering, singing and dancing and encourage alternatives like clapping and waving.
- Stay outdoors as much as possible.

## **Gathering Limits**

On September 19, 2020 the Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Public Health Measures Table, reduced limits on the number of people permitted to attend unmonitored and private social gatherings across the entire province.

Unmonitored and private social gatherings include functions, parties, dinners, gatherings, BBQs or wedding receptions held in private residences, backyards, parks and other recreational areas.

The new limit on the number of people allowed to attend an unmonitored private social gathering across the province is:

- 10 people at an indoor event or gathering (previous limit of 50); or
- 25 people at an outdoor event or gathering (previous limit of 100).

Indoor and outdoor events and gatherings cannot be merged together. Gatherings of 35 (25 outdoors and 10 indoors) are not permitted.

The new limits do not apply to events or gatherings held in staffed businesses and facilities, such as bars, restaurants, cinemas, convention centres, banquet halls, gyms, places of worship, recreational sporting or performing art events. Existing rules, including public health and workplace safety measures for these businesses and facilities, continue to be in effect.

For more information see the news release [Ontario Limits the Size of Unmonitored and Private Social Gatherings across Entire Province](#).

For information about Stage 3 see [A Framework for Reopening our Province Stage 3](#).

## **Social Circles**

As of October 2, 2020 The Ontario Government has paused the 10-person social circles. Ontarians are advised to only allow close contact with people living in their own household and to maintain two metres physical distancing from everyone else.

Individuals who live alone may consider having close contact with another household.

### **Everyone can help make a difference by:**

- Maintaining physical distancing of at least two metres from people outside of your household
- Wearing a face covering in indoor and outdoor public spaces where physical distancing is a challenge
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water
- Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
- Practising good hygiene (covering a cough and sneeze and avoiding touching your face)
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often
- Following provincial Orders on public and social gatherings that mandate the number of people who may gather.
- Staying at home and away from others if you are feeling ill or have symptoms of COVID-19
- Downloading the COVID Alert app, to be notified if you have been in contact with anyone with COVID-19
- Working from home or remotely as much as possible
- Minimizing travel and self-isolating for 14 days after all international travel
- Protecting the most vulnerable by following public health advice
- Getting tested if you have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19

## **Resources**

[Considerations for Celebrations](#)

[Ontario's Self-Assessment Tool](#)

[Reopening Ontario](#)

[A Framework for Reopening Ontario – Stage 3](#)

[O. Reg. 364/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 3](#)