



# Media Release

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October 28, 2020

## Medical Officer of Health – Halloween Message

Halloween is a fun break from our everyday routines. For most people, anytime one remembers or thinks of Halloween, they most likely catch themselves smiling. Our children's mental wellbeing desperately needs this type of smile during this emergency. However, with COVID-19 we all owe it to children to give them a safe Halloween – a modified Halloween.

So here is the thing. If you are unwell, don't even think about it. Stay at home and away from others. Virtual Halloween is all you'll find on our menu. Just skip to the end of this message.

If you are part of a household, rather than the traditional trick-or-treat, we encourage you and your children to explore alternative ways to celebrate. Have your own Halloween-themed party at home. Be creative; dressing up, decorating, crafts, carve a pumpkin or carve a dozen pumpkins, and scavenger hunts are some ideas for all ages.

If you are a child in Grey and Bruce, you are in luck. If you choose to go out to trick-or-treat, we encourage you to only go out with members of your household, do not congregate in groups, keep social distances, and wear a face covering – a costume mask doesn't count. Choose a costume that makes wearing a mask or face covering easy. Remember the usual Halloween safety practices, dress for the weather, wear reflectors, watch for traffic, and check overall treats before eating. If offering candy, allow for touchless trick-or-treating.

If you are over 18 years old, as a responsible adult, kindly skip Halloween this year. The less people participate, the less is the risk. Let's focus our efforts on ensuring a safe Halloween for children. With so many Halloweens under your belt, I hope we can skip it this year without any difficulty. Unlike children, you don't qualify for Medical Officer of Health recommendations of indoor parties. In fact, adult-themed Halloween parties, especially parties where alcohol is available, are strongly discouraged. They are a recipe for spreading the virus- a scary recipe. By scary, I don't mean Halloween scary; I mean real life-and-death scary; emotionally-scaring scary. As we saw with Thanksgiving, parties encourage people to mix and mingle and spread the virus. Even if people recovered from COVID-19 as an illness, the damage to their lifelong friendships and relationships in close-knit communities may not recover that well. If you must gather, consider outdoors and limit the numbers. It is the letter of the law to have less

A healthier future for all.

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101 17<sup>th</sup> Street East, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 0A5 [www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca](http://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca)

519-376-9420

1-800-263-3456

Fax 519-376-0605

than 10 people indoors or 25 outdoors. If you are wondering, the answer is “NO”, these two numbers are not to be combined; either indoors or outdoors.

**Please remember the Three Ws, Watch your distance, Wash your hands, and Wear a mask.**

To learn more on enjoying a safe Halloween and to avoid becoming an acquaintance with our Contact Tracers through receiving a gazillion phone calls from them in 14 days from Halloween, please visit our [website](#).

Let's make Halloween safe and enjoyable for everyone. And I remain,

Yours very truly,

Dr. Ian Arra

**For More Information:**

Dr. Ian Arra, MD MSc FRCPC ACPM ABPM

Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

To arrange to speak with Dr. Arra, please contact Drew Ferguson at:

519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 ext. 1269 or [d.ferguson@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca](mailto:d.ferguson@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca)