



News release:

For immediate release:

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Pandemic Halloween Safety Tips

Billings, MT – Halloween isn't canceled in Yellowstone County, even though our county had more than 1,100 people with active COVID-19 cases this week. This serious virus does require all of us to take precautions.

RiverStone Health, the county public health agency, asks everyone to do their part to minimize the risk of spreading the virus through holiday activities. There are safe, less safe and unsafe Halloween traditions.

Ways to safely celebrate Halloween include:

- Celebrating at home with members of your household and no other guests.
- Decorating pumpkins with members of your household.
- Using video chats to show off costumes to relatives and friends;
- Hiding treats in your home for your children to find.
- Hosting an online party.
- Decorating your home or yard for Halloween.
- Preparing a Halloween-themed meal or baking Halloween treats.

Less safe ways to celebrate Halloween are:

- Door-to-door trick or treating. If you decide to trick or treat, at least lower the risk by ensuring that you and your children wash hands afterward and before eating any treats.
- If you decide to provide treats, leave the goodies on your lighted porch or on a table outside. Don't personally hand candy to trick or treaters. Don't allow children to grab treats from a bowl.

Unsafe Halloween celebratory actions include:

- Handing out treats or going out while you are sick.
- Attending large gatherings during the pandemic and Halloween is no exception.
- Attending indoor events with people who don't live in your house.

- Going to haunted houses or going on hayrides. Both these activities are unsafe because they bring people close together and may involve screaming or loud talking, which increases risk of spreading the virus if any of the speakers or screamers are infected.

Protection against COVID-19 depends on each of us: keep your distance; wash your hands; wear a mask in public indoor, school and workplace spaces; avoid large gatherings; and stay home if you are ill.

You can find more tips for a safer Halloween online at CDC.gov and search for “Halloween”.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>

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