

# Ask an Expert – Safety Tips for Trick-or-Treating in 2020

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10/23/2020



As your family considers whether or not to participate in trick-or-treating this year, talk with neighbors and those you intend to visit and decide how to best keep everyone safe. If you decide to welcome trick-or-treaters to your porch or venture out with your little ghouls and goblins, consider these basic guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

- Be aware that the more closely you interact with others and the longer the interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. Stay 6 feet away from people who do not live with you.
- Avoid direct contact with trick-or-treaters.
- Hand out your treats outdoors, if possible.
- Set up a table or station with individually bagged treats for trick-or-treaters to take.
- Wash your hands before handling treats.
- Wear a mask. Remember that a costume mask is **not** a substitute for a cloth mask. You can even make your cloth mask part of your costume. Do **not** wear a costume mask over a cloth mask, as it can make breathing difficult.
- Bring hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol with you and use it after touching objects or people.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when you get home and before eating anything.
- For more safety guidelines, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays/halloween.html>.

## If you opt out:

- If you opt not to have trick-or-treaters come to your home this year, place a sign noting you are not handing out treats due to health and safety guidelines. You can make it in the shape of a headstone, pumpkin or other Halloween objects to make it fun and friendly as you convey your wishes.

## If you opt in:

- Make it obvious you want guests, and be sure they have plenty of light. Consider placing a pathway of tea lights inside white paper bags, or cut out jack-o-lanterns and place along the driveway or sidewalk leading to your door.
- Avoid anything flammable. Halloween decorations made of plastic, paper, cornstalks or hay are great for creating a festive scene, but they are highly flammable and can catch on fire when combined with lighted candles or spotlights that put out heat. Be wise and safe by choosing low wattage/LED lights and other safe lights to illuminate your decorations. If you use candles, make sure they are out of the reach of children, pets and costumes or decorations.
- Clear the way. Prevent your guests from tripping or falling by putting away hoses, garden tools, sprinklers and bikes. Also, if you have pets, take a minute to “scoop the poop” off the lawn. If you have decorations that require extension cords, be sure to use heavy tape to secure cords to hard surfaces.
- Keep pets away from the action. It is best to keep dogs and cats in another part of the yard or home. It will remove the chance of unpredictable behavior from your pets and keep visitors safe.

Make this Halloween fun and safe for everyone. The tips mentioned above should help those who plan to join in the festivities as well as those who choose to opt out.

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