



**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

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## Health Department Offers COVID Safety Guidance for Halloween

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Hamilton County Health Department wants residents to know what their risks are and how they can protect themselves and others this Halloween holiday. The customary practices of Halloween, such as trick-or-treating or costume parties, could cause people to come into contact with the COVID-19 virus.

“We know the approaching holiday season brings expectations of seasonal gatherings and festivals,” said Health Department Administrator Becky Barnes, “The most important way you can protect others and yourself is to wear a mask, maintain at least 6 feet of social distance, and stay home if you are sick with any symptoms.”

Individuals and families should consider the following in their observances of Halloween:

- COVID-19 [symptoms](#) – if you have any symptoms, regardless of how mild they may seem, do not leave home, go trick-or-treating, or attend any gatherings.
- Costume masks – these should not be used in place of cloth masks unless it is made of two or more layers of breathable fabric that covers your mouth and nose and does not leave gaps around your face. Wearing a cloth mask over a costume mask could create breathing difficulties. Instead, consider using a Halloween-themed cloth mask that conforms to the above standards.
- Trick-or-treating and trunk-or-treating - these are some of the highest risk activities as they put people into close proximity with others, especially people outside of your household unit.
  - If you are giving treats away, only use prepackaged items. Consider creating individual grab bags and leaving them at the edge of your driveway or yard.
- Duration and number of people at a gathering:
  - The lowest risk is to not have Halloween parties this year.
  - The longer you are at an event and the more people at an event, the higher the risk.
- Traveling – traveling outside your home community increases your risk of either contacting or spreading the virus. Staying at home or close to home lowers your risk.
- Haunted houses – screaming and talking loudly can create respiratory droplets and fine spray that can carry the virus and is breathed in by others.
- Community levels of COVID-19 – the virus is present in our community with more than 1,500 active cases in Hamilton County, and there are active cases in all of the surrounding counties. There are no COVID-free areas in our county.
- Some low risk activities include carving a pumpkin at home with household members, having a virtual pumpkin carving contest or a virtual costume contest, decorating at home, or scavenger hunt-style trick-or-treat around the house with just your household members.

More specific guidance for this holiday season can be found on the [CDC's Holiday Celebration website](#).

For more information about COVID-19 and free Health Department testing, call the hotline at (423) 209-8383, or visit these Health Department resources:

- Website: <http://health.hamiltontn.org/>
- English Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonTNHealthDept/>
- Spanish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SaludHamiltonTN/>
- YouTube English: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCkF8VUBQFLiJoxh8Sk10mA>
- YouTube Spanish: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwHuLpBFuLOf6hDTCFbfyQ>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/HamiltonHealth>
- Subscribe to the Mailing List: <https://landing.mailerlite.com/webforms/landing/j6u3e5>

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