

COPING WITH COVID-19

Making Halloween Preparations for Youth

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“Halloween should be a safe and fun experience for all family members.”

The fall is quickly approaching, which means Halloween is just around the corner. Halloween is a time for families to get out and enjoy lots of candy and fun. During the pandemic, those fun times may look a little different than in past years. This news may be hard for youth to understand, but to keep everyone safe and out of harm's way, this article provides the family with ideas and steps to keep the tradition of celebrating a reality.



ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITION

Part of the fun of Halloween is getting dressed up in costumes and sharing candy. This can still happen. Individuals may want to do some different activities rather than the traditional door to door. Consider activities that can include the whole family.

Activities include:

- **Conducting a pumpkin carving contest.** Include different candy awards for each category you create. Some categories could

be scariest pumpkin, most creative, or traditional.

- **Plan time to cook your family's favorite treats.** Include the youth in planning and cooking so that it can be a family affair.
- **Decorate your home for Halloween.** Allow everyone's creativity to flow. Find things that you can use around the home so that the cost does not impact your budget.
- **Plan a treat hunt for youth.** Plant candy and prizes around the house and yard, and allow youth to go and find it.
- **Travel around the community to view Halloween decorations.** Create a game that will be fun and engaging with youth.
- **Plan a scary movie night.** Include the normal movie necessities; popcorn, drink, and candy, but include something different so that youth feel that it is different from the norm.



- **Put together treat bags.** Make sure that each helper practices safe hand washing for at least 20 seconds before constructing the bags.
- **Conduct a family costume party.** Put on music, plan party food, and enjoy.
- **Decorate doors.** Allow youth to be creative by decorating doors for Halloween.

As you can see, families can be creative with alternative activities to keep youth engaged in holiday traditions. Think about what will interest the family and go from there.



CONNECTING WITH OTHERS VIRTUALLY TO CELEBRATE

This pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to connect with people we may have found it hard to before because of distance. Now connecting virtually is as easy as a click of a button. Coordinate a family virtual costume party. While connected individuals can plan other games with the youth such as virtual BINGO, Pictionary, and I Spy.

STICKING TO TRADITION

The alternative is not for everyone, but the virus is still out there. If individuals must gather, be

reminded of the 6 feet rule of thumb. Additionally, make sure each family member has a mask in addition to their costumes. According to the Centers for Disease Control, costume face shields or mask does not negate the need for a cloth face masks unless it is made with two or more layers of breathable fabric that covers both the mouth and nose. But remember, children have to breathe, so figure out a way to incorporate the cloth mask along with the costume.



FINAL THOUGHTS

The pandemic has changed the way we conduct our traditions, but that does not mean fun activities should be eliminated completely. We have to be creative and adapt to the changes so that everyone stays connected. However, individuals have to be smart about safety. Remember, if an individual has contracted COVID-19 or has been in contact with someone that has contracted the virus, they need to self-quarantine. Traveling great distances where an individual is unaware of the COVID-19 spread is not ideal. Be reminded that others are experiencing this as well, no one is alone.

REFERENCES

Centers for Disease Control. 2020. Holiday Celebrations. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>

For General Health Information: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)
 TN COVID-19 Information: <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>
 TN Mental Health Hotline: 1-855-274-7471
 TN Addiction and Recovery Hotline: 1-800-889-9789

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