



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 30, 2020

**Know Your Risk: COVID-19 risk levels for fall activities**

*Cabarrus Health Alliance urges community members to plan safe fall, Halloween celebrations*

Kannapolis, N.C. – As fall and cooler temperature arrive, families have already started planning upcoming Halloween and other fall activities, like visiting pumpkin patches and trick-or-treating. The Cabarrus Health Alliance (CHA) is urging residents to plan safe and early, so they can know their risk of exposure associated with certain fall activities.

“Ways in which we traditionally celebrate Halloween or other fall activities does not always allow people to minimize close contact with non-household members,” said Dr. Bonnie Coyle, CHA Health Director. “We want to share this information, so that residents know their level of exposure risk when participating in certain activities. Hopefully, it will encourage them to select a safer alternative for their family.”

COVID-19 can easily pass from person to person through close contact. It’s difficult to maintain a safe distance on porches and doorsteps, especially in neighborhoods where trick or treating is popular. NC Department of Health and Human Services has provided guidance that trick-or-treating is allowed as long as everyone wears a mask.

*Please see page two of this release for information on Low, Moderate and High Risk Fall Activities.*

Governor’s Executive Order No. 163 requires certain activities to remain closed based on high risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19. Allowable activities and events should still abide by the mass gathering limits of 25 people indoors and 50 people outdoors.

Indoor Haunted Houses	Train Rides (conducted for amusement purposes only)	Mechanical or structural rides and mechanically operated carousels
Fair-Type games and gaming activities	Hayrides (conducted for amusement purposes only)	

For additional guidance and recommendations related to fall-related events, you can access the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services’ interim guidance document for fall-related events here: <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/NCDHHS-Interim-Guidance-for-Fall-Events.pdf>

As a reminder, CHA wants everyone to be able to enjoy Halloween and other fall activities in a way that keeps them, their families and others safe.

If you or a family member have symptoms of fever (100.4 or higher), cough, shortness of breath, or other COVID-19 related systems, seeking COVID-19 testing is recommended. Please call your primary care provider for testing. If you do not have a primary care provider, you can call the CHA Health Information Line at 704-920-1213.

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Cabarrus Health Alliance: Marcella Beam at 704-920-1282 or [marcella.beam@cabarrushealth.org](mailto:marcella.beam@cabarrushealth.org)

## Fall Activities: Low, Moderate and High Risk of Exposure

### Low Risk Activities

- Carving or decorating pumpkins with members of your household and displaying them
- Carving or decorating pumpkins outside, at a safe distance, with neighbors or friends
- Decorating your house, apartment, or living space
- Doing a Halloween scavenger hunt where children are given lists of Halloween-themed things to look for while they walk outdoors from house to house admiring Halloween decorations at a distance (children should stay within their household groups)
- Having a virtual Halloween costume contest
- Having a Halloween movie night with people you live with
- Having a scavenger hunt-style trick-or-treat search with your household members in or around your home rather than going house to house

### Moderate Risk Activities

- Encourage no or low touch trick-or-treating
- Line up individually wrapped goodie bags for families to grab and go while continuing to social distance (such as at the end of a driveway or at the edge of a yard)
  - If you are preparing goodie bags, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 second before and after preparing the bags
- Place individual pieces of candy spaced out on a table for families/children to take themselves
- Gently toss candy to trick or treaters from 6 feet away
- Use a “candy chute” or tube to pass along candy from the porch to trick or treaters standing 6 feet away
- Having a small group, outdoor, open-air costume parade where people are distanced more than 6 feet apart
- Reverse trick or treat where children dress in their costumes and stay at their house or front yard and neighbors walk or drive by to drop off candy
- Having a small group, outdoor, open-air costume parade where people are distanced more than 6 feet apart
- Attending a costume party held outdoors where protective mask are used and people can remain more than 6 feet apart
- Having an outdoor Halloween movie night with local family friends with people spaced at least 6 feet apart
  - If screaming will likely occur, greater distancing is advised. The greater the distance, the lower the risk of spreading a respiratory virus.
  - Lower your risk by following CDC recommendations on [hosting gatherings or cookouts](#).

### Higher Risk Activities

Avoid these activities to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19:

- Participating in traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children who go door-to-door or children take candy from a shared bucket
- Having trunk-or-treat where treats are handed out from trunks of cars lined up in large parking lots
- Attending crowded costume parties held indoors
- Using alcohol or drugs, which can cloud judgement and increase risky behavior

NC DHHS Interim Guidance for Halloween Event Organizers- September 25, 2020

<https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/NCDHHS-Interim-Guidance-for-Halloween.pdf>