



Yakima Health District

Prevention is Our Business

COVID-19 Guidance for Celebrating Halloween and Día de los Muertos

This October, the Yakima Health District would like remind individuals to continue to practice the recommended public health guidelines to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in our community. We would also like to encourage residents to consider safe, alternative celebration options for upcoming Halloween and Día de los Muertos festivities.

Current orders from the Governor's Office restrict gatherings in Modified Phase 1 of the Safe Start Plan to no more than 5 people outside, socially distanced and masked. Gatherings of greater than 10 people are not permitted until phase 4. There is also still a ban on indoor gatherings with individuals outside of the household until Phase 3. **YHD explicitly discourages Halloween or Día de los Muertos parties as large social gatherings are not permitted at this time in our county.**

For those planning on celebrating Halloween, there are still many ways to have fun and celebrate safely. YHD encourages individuals to consider the following alternatives:

- Outdoor Halloween-themed movie, or indoor Halloween-themed movies with household members
- Halloween yard decorations
- Virtual/online costume parties with classmates or family
- Halloween-themed dinner at home
- Halloween candy scavenger hunt at home

We discourage door-to-door trick-or-treating as this promotes close contact with members of different household, which may increase risk of exposure to COVID-19.

If a family chooses to pass out Halloween treats, we recommend the following:

- Masks on for all adults and children 5+, and for children 2-4 as tolerated: (https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/Secretary_of_Health_Order_20-03_Statewide_Face_Coverings.pdf)
- Distribution outside, with the home visited placing treats in the trick-or-treater's bag/baskets rather than children reaching into a common bowl.
- Sanitizing hands before handing out each treat. Alternatively treats can be placed on a sanitized table, spaced apart. Tables should be cleaned before being restocked and should be supervised.

- Chalking X's (or pumpkins, skulls, etc) on the sidewalk to ensure social distancing is maintained if heavy foot traffic expected.
- Consider distributing non-sugary treats or non-food Halloween-themed items (bubbles, play-doh, temporary tattoos, stamps, etc), and encourage options for those children who may have food allergies.

YHD encourages individuals to celebrate Halloween with their households, however for organizations considering Trunk-or-Treat *drive-thru style* Halloween events we recommend the following:

- Make sure to follow any necessary local traffic regulations resulting in changes to traffic flow or contact local law enforcement for assistance with traffic control.
- Cars must be spaced so that individuals distributing candy from them are no closer than 6 feet from others (recommend 8-10 feet between vehicles)
- All volunteers must wear facemasks. (Valved masks are not permitted; face shields are not permitted without concurrent facemask use). Volunteers must also frequently sanitize hands throughout the event.
- If car windows are open, individuals in cars are also required to wear masks per state orders
- Volunteers must be provided with education about preventing COVID transmission, and organizers are recommended to perform health screening for all participants who will be distributing treats/candy or otherwise interacting with the public (screening to include temperature check, questions re: close contact with COVID+ individual in past 14 days or any current COVID-19 symptoms. Any with positive responses must be excluded from participation). Organizers must keep a log of volunteers and participants distributing candy, and volunteers/participants are encouraged to notify organizers if they develop COVID-19 symptoms or have a positive COVID-19 test within 48 hours of the event.
- Event organizers are responsible for observing and enforcing COVID-19 safety measures amongst all volunteers and participants.
- Trunk-or-Treat events where individuals walk from car to car are strongly discouraged as they facilitate crowding that violates gathering limitations of the State Start Plan.

Día de Los Muertos

Families planning to celebrate Día de Los Muertos are encouraged to consider the following celebration alternatives:

- Prepare your deceased loved one's favorite foods at home or play their favorite music
- Make and decorate an altar for the deceased at home
- Organize a virtual get-together celebration with your family and friends

Stay safe and healthy this holiday season!

Additional resources:

Washington State Department of Health Tips for a Safer Halloween:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/HalloweenTips.pdf>

CDC COVID-19 Holiday Guidance for Halloween, Día de Los Muertos:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html#halloween>