

Tips to keep your kids safe this Halloween

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After last year's halt on Halloween due to the COVID-19 pandemic, sweet relief is coming for those who celebrate the spookiest day of the year.

"This year, we're looking toward a Halloween that hopefully brings back

some of the activities that kids really enjoy this time of year," says Dr. Nipunie Rajapakse, a pediatric infectious diseases physician with Mayo Clinic Children's Center. "That includes some activities like trick-or-treating. I think one of the big things that we've learned about how the COVID-19 virus is spread is that it really doesn't spread well outdoors. And trick-or-treating is an [activity](#) that happens outdoors. We think that with some precautions, we can trick or treat safely this Halloween."

How children can safely participate in Halloween festivities depends on the activities and the age group, says Dr. Rajapakse.

"For vaccinated kids over 12 years old, we would say trick-or-treating this year is fine. We obviously want to avoid any situation where large groups of people are gathering still. And, so, trick-or-treating in [small groups](#), is what we would recommend if your kids are looking forward to doing that this year."

For [younger children](#) who are not yet eligible to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and most likely want to trick or treat, Dr. Rajapakse says Halloween safety means adding a few more tactics to your planning.

"There's no vaccine that has received emergency use authorization for children under 12 years of age yet, so that group is going to be unvaccinated," says Dr. Rajapakse. "This is where using these additional strategies to help keep everyone safe really becomes more important.

Those additional strategies are:

- Wearing a mask
- Avoiding any crowded indoor spaces
- Practicing physical distancing of 6 feet as much as possible
- Washing hands frequently

"All these different strategies together help protect that group because kids under 12 are probably going to make up most of the kids who want to trick or treat this year," says Dr. Rajapakse.

A layered approach is most effective when it comes to COVID-19 prevention strategies. Dr. Rajapakse says that starts with getting vaccinated for COVID-19, if eligible, followed by wearing a mask around others.

"When it comes to activities like trick-or-treating, there's some likelihood you'll be in contact with others from outside of your household. There will be some gathering at doorsteps of homes, and so wearing a mask gives you that extra layer of protection. Thankfully, Halloween is a holiday that usually comes along with masks. There are a lot of fun things and fun prints you can do with masks and help keep everyone safe."

If you have a child or family members who may be at high risk of infection, such as those who are immunocompromised, virtual costume parties or activities involving household [family members](#), like a scary movie night, pumpkin-carving, or a candy scavenger hunt around your home and yard are low-risk options to consider.

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