

Media Release

October 27, 2020

Stay Healthy and Safe this Fall

The days are getting shorter and the warmth of the summer and early fall is changing.

Many people find this change difficult. This is a good time to focus on doing what we can to be physically, mentally and socially healthy and resilient. The foundation is **healthy eating**, regular **physical activity**, being **outside in nature**, building resilience, **connecting with others in safe ways**, and **avoiding problematic substance use**. This foundation also builds our immune system which will help us cope with any infection we may encounter, including COVID-19.

During this time of year, people also have many special opportunities to celebrate together. Find creative ways to have fun and honour the meaningful traditions that matter to you. Each of us has a part to play in keeping ourselves and others safe.

All celebrations rest on the basic COVID-19 public health precautions: staying home when sick and getting tested for COVID-19 when it's recommended, keeping 2 metres apart from others outside the household, avoiding gatherings with close contact, wearing a properly fitting face covering/mask, avoiding touching common surfaces, and performing regular hand washing/sanitizing.

Any symptoms of COVID-19 need to be taken seriously – assuming they are “just a cold” can miss the presence of COVID-19 and spread the virus to others. If you are concerned you were exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms, take the online **COVID-19 self-assessment**; and get tested if you have **symptoms compatible with COVID-19**, or if you have been advised of exposure by your local public health unit or through COVID Alert. Find out more about testing and symptoms here: <https://healthunit.org/health-information/covid-19/assessment-testing-results/> or call 1-800-660-5853 x 2222.

Halloween:

Community event - If you are thinking about attending a Halloween community event in person, check to make sure they are following public health precautions to reduce risk, including that the event is outside with lots of space, people are spaced safely apart to avoid close contact with others, everyone is wearing a properly fitting face covering/mask, and contact with common surfaces or handling common objects is avoided. **It is also critical that families not travel outside of their community to celebrate Halloween.**

Instead of Trick or Treating try:

- Participating in an online activity like a costume contest or pumpkin carving contest with family and friends, or make a Halloween Tik Tok or Instagram video of you and your household all dressed up;
- Decorating your lawn and going for a neighbourhood Halloween house decoration tour, or a “haunted trick or treat hunt” at home with your household members;
- Having a spooky Halloween dinner and monster dance with your household with all sorts of creative scary dishes to enjoy;
- Doing an online Haunted house game with family and friends or sharing spooky stories over the phone or Zoom;
- Doing a scavenger hunt on your property with your family;
- Finding creative ways to share treats safely like dropping them off in your friends’ mailboxes or leaving a surprise Halloween gift basket on a doorstep.
- You can put up a poster to avoid any confusion from the little trick or treaters who might stop by if you are not participating in trick or treating. ([We have a poster online here](#))

If you decide to participate in trick or treating:

- Only go out with members of your household; only trick or treat outside;
- Do not leave treats in a bucket or bowl for children to grab;
- Both trick or treaters and people handing out candy should wear a face covering. A costume mask is not a substitute for a face covering;
- Do not congregate or linger at doorsteps and remember to line up two metres apart if waiting. Avoid high-touch surfaces and objects;
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly, or use hand sanitizer, whether collecting or handing out treats.

Remembrance Day:

Consider alternatives to attending a Remembrance Day event in person, particularly if you have health problems.

- Watch a live stream Remembrance Day event on TV with your household;
- Write a message to a veteran you know;
- Donate to your local Legion;

If you are planning on attending an event in person make sure they are following public health precautions to reduce risk, including that the event is outside with lots of space, people are spaced safely apart to avoid close contact with others, everyone is wearing a properly fitting face covering/mask, and contact with common surfaces or handling common objects is avoided.

Other Fall Activities, including Hunting:

Avoid gatherings with people outside of your household, particularly with people from high transmission areas.

Hunting season often gets groups of people together and although it is mostly outdoors there are still some precautions to take:

- Wear a mask/face covering when around those outside your household – even if outdoors and unable to keep 2 meters away from others;
- Instead of car-pooling with others – take separate vehicles to the hunt camp;
- Think about the hunt camp and try to plan separate areas for different households. This may mean pitching an extra tent or bringing in another RV
- Avoid shared food or buffet style eating as well as activities that involve touching common objects (like playing cards).

Check out other ideas about family and other celebrations: <https://healthunit.org/health-information/covid-19/gatherings-social-circles/> .