

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Have a Safe and Healthy Hallowe'en



**For Immediate Release — Monday, October 19, 2020**

**Timmins, Ontario** — Today, Dr. Lianne Catton, Medical Officer of Health for the Porcupine Health Unit (PHU), is offering guidance and clarification on steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19 during Hallowe'en. "Many of us look forward to participating in Hallowe'en-themed events including trick-or-treating," Dr. Catton said. "The Porcupine Unit is encouraging the public to follow COVID-19 prevention measures this Hallowe'en to limit the spread. To help celebrate safely, know your risk."

"If you decide to trick-or-treat, proceed with a high degree of caution," Dr. Catton explained. "The PHU will be closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation across our region and may have specific advice closer to Hallowe'en. Public health advice for events and gathering will be based on the COVID-19 situation at that time and in that community and will consider the potential risks of the activities associated with the holiday or event."

"COVID-19 is circulating in our area and to limit the spread, follow public health measures including staying at home if you are feeling ill or have symptoms," Dr. Catton stated. "By keeping COVID-19 prevention measures at the forefront of all activities, we can have a safe and health Hallowe'en."

Before participating in any Hallowe'en activities, *screen yourself and your children* for symptoms.

### **Hallowe'en COVID-19 safety tips:**

Celebrate at home with members of your immediate household:

- Have fun with Hallowe'en decorations.
- Showcase Hallowe'en crafts and projects on your porch and in your front windows
- Make your own spooky treats to enjoy at home (e.g., clementine jack-o-lanterns or ghostly cookies).
- Host or attend a virtual costume party.
- Set up a piñata at home filled with your favourite Hallowe'en treats.
- Set up a treat hunt around your home. Hide some goodies in hidden or secret spots.
- Set up trick-or-treat stations in your home by using the bedroom and closet doors.

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- Set up a scavenger hunt inside or outdoors.
- Carve pumpkins together. This can even be done virtually!
- Pick out some Hallowe'en themed books to read together.
- Enjoy a spooky Hallowe'en movie night.

#### **Tips for Trick-or-Treating safely:**

- Choose a costume that makes wearing a mask or face covering easy. A costume mask is not a substitute. Make sure your non-medical mask fits well and covers your nose, mouth and chin.
- Trick-or-treat outside with your household and remain close to home.
- Stay 2 metres away from other people.
- Avoid touching doorbells or railings: call "trick-or-treat" from 2 metres away.
- Bring hand sanitizer and use it often.
- Do not gather or linger at doorsteps
- Wash your hands before trick-or-treating, when you return home, and before eating candy.
- Remember the usual Hallowe'en safety tips: dress for the weather, wear reflectors, watch for traffic, and check over all treats collected before eating.

#### **Tips for handing out candy safely:**

- Do not hand out candy if feeling ill or you are in isolation.
- Choose a costume that makes wearing a mask easy. A costume mask is not a substitute for a face covering.
- Offer contactless trick or treating by portioning treats out ahead of time.
- Space portioned treats on a table or blanket outside. Do not leave out self-serve bowls.
- Use tongs to hand out pre-packaged candy to avoid handling treats.
- Stay outside. Set up a trick-or-treating station outside your door, just inside your garage, or hand out treats from your driveway or front lawn.
- If trick-or-treaters come to your door, ask them to knock or call out instead of ringing the doorbell.
- Build a candy slide, candy catapult or other fun, non-touch delivery methods.
- Hand out non-edible treats instead of candy. These are great for children with allergies and can be sanitized.
- Clean and disinfect any frequently touched surfaces often.

#### **Hosting or attending a Hallowe'en activity? Here are safety tips to consider:**

- Stay home if feeling ill, even if symptoms are mild.
- Keep attendees to those within your household if possible
- Remember provincial gathering limits: 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors
- Those outside your household must practice physical distancing.
- Host your party outdoors

- Choose games and activities that don't use shared items and allows people to stay 2 metres apart.
- Do not share drinks, food, cigarettes, vapes or cannabis.
- Provide hand sanitizer.
- Wash or sanitize your hands often.
- Wear a face covering and maintain physical distancing of 2m from people outside of your household.

*Additional COVID-19 information can be found on the Porcupine Health Unit's website.*

*Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.*

The Porcupine Health Unit is located in Northeastern Ontario, serving the entire Cochrane District and Hornepayne, in Algoma District. The main office is located in Timmins, Ontario, with branch offices in Cochrane, Hearst, Hornepayne, Iroquois Falls, Kapuskasing, Matheson, Moosonee and Smooth Rock Falls.

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