



## **Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 6, 2020

### **Current COVID-19 case count**

**Scott County** – Total of 3,339

Total deaths in Scott County: 29

**Rock Island County** – 22 new cases since Monday; total of 3,320

Currently in hospital: 22

Total deaths in Rock Island County: 87

Death reported Tuesday: woman in her 90s who had been living in a long-term care facility

### **Today's call**

A video recording of today's media briefing can be found at

<https://www.scottcountyiowa.com/health/covid19/news>

### **Lower-risk activities still offer Halloween fun**

Remarks from Edward Rivers, director, Scott County Health Department

With the advent of fall, families are starting to plan for the upcoming holiday season, starting with Halloween.

This year, as with many things, it would be safest to plan special events at home, using social media and other meeting platforms to connect with family and friends. However, for those who choose to celebrate in person, the CDC and both the Iowa and Illinois Department of Public Health are offering the following guidance.

Consider lower- or moderate-risk activities that allow you to keep social distancing between individuals from different households:

- Carving or decorating pumpkins
  - Either indoors with members of your household or outdoors, at a safe distance, with neighbors or friends.
- Online parties/contests (e.g. costume or pumpkin carving)
- Scavenger hunt-style trick-or-treat search with your household members in or around your home rather than going house to house.
- Car parades including:
  - Contests for decorated cars
  - Drive-through events where individuals stay in their cars and drive through an area with Halloween displays.

- Drive-in events where individuals are given a treat bag (with commercially packaged non-perishable treats) or take away item from an organizer while the individuals stay in their car.
- Dressing up homes and yards with Halloween-themed decorations.

Other options include:

- One-way trick-or-treating where individually wrapped goodie bags are lined up for families to grab and go while still keeping distance between individuals
- Small group, outdoor, open-air costume parade with social distancing
- Outdoor costume party where protective, not decorative, masks are used and people can stay more than 6 feet apart.
- Visiting pumpkin patches or orchards while wearing masks and social distancing
- Outdoor Halloween movie night with local family friends with people spaced at least 6 feet apart

### **Trick-or-treating as safely as possible**

Remarks from Nita Ludwig, administrator, Rock Island County Health Department

Trick-or-treating and trunk-or-treating are mainstays of Halloween celebrations in our community and children look forward to trick-or-treating all year. However, these events make it really difficult to social distance between individuals from different households. Unfortunately, this day must look different this year.

Here are some suggestions.

For those wishing to pass out candy:

- Leave individually wrapped candy on the front porch or sidewalk with the pieces spread out to limit interaction with trick-or-treaters. Set up the treat station at least 6 feet from your front door. Remember that children frequently show mild symptoms when they are infected with COVID.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds before placing the candy on the table and when refilling.
- Wear a proper face mask. A costume mask, such as those worn for Halloween, is not a substitute for a face covering. If face coverings are worn under costume masks, please ensure this does not create breathing problems, and if so, discard the costume mask.

For those wishing to trick-or-treat or trunk-or-treat,

- Wear a real face mask for the same reasons just mentioned.
- Trick-or-treat with members of your household only.
- Limit the number of houses/trunks you visit.
- Do not crowd at a door; give yourself space between other groups.
- Stay local. Avoid the urge to attend events in other towns.
- Use hand sanitizer before eating any candy and as needed.

A few other fall activities are considered high risk as well:

- In-person Halloween parties held indoors.
- Indoor haunted houses because people may be crowded together and screaming.
- Corn mazes where individuals take part in groups, often with members of different households.
- Hayrack rides that mix members from different households. In Illinois, these rides are allowed at 50 percent capacity

In Illinois, haunted houses may be allowed in some cities with enhanced safety and cleaning procedures in place. We at the health department have reviewed a few plans and have offered safety suggestions. There never is a zero risk in any activity right now, but all partners have worked together to improve safety.

Children aren't the only ones who look forward to Halloween. We offer suggestions for adult social gatherings:

- Large gatherings with more people are considered higher risk than smaller group gatherings.
- Indoor parties or gatherings should include social distancing, wearing masks, and handwashing.
- The more time you spend at a gathering, the closer the contact, the more people, the higher your risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Our guidance doesn't just end with the celebration. If you participated in higher-risk activities and you feel symptoms, you should:

- Stay home as much as possible.
- Avoid being around people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Consider getting tested for COVID-19 and then stay home until you know the results.

Stay safe this Halloween!

### **More information**

- [www.TogetherQC.com](http://www.TogetherQC.com)
- [coronavirus.iowa.gov](http://coronavirus.iowa.gov)
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=2>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Rock%20Island>
- <https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/facilities/Pages/Covid19Response.aspx>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/long-term-care-facility-outbreaks-covid-19>

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