



Brevard news . .

For Immediate Release

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Halloween Safety and Covid-19

(Brevard, NC October 13,2020) Soon it will be Halloween! This holiday season, however, is different now that we are in the midst of a pandemic. The Transylvania Public Health and the City of Brevard have some recommendations, based on the Center for Communicative Diseases (CDC) guidelines. The CDC recommends that traditional Halloween trick-or-treating and costume parties be avoided in lieu of safer gatherings and events this year. Specifically, here are the recommendations:

Higher risk activities to avoid:

- Traditional door-to-door trick-or-treat activities
- Traditional trunk-or-treat where treats are handed out from trunks of vehicles to children walking through the parking lot of the sponsor
- Attending crowded costume parties held indoors
- Indoor haunted houses
- Hayrides or tractor rides
- Using alcohol or drugs, which can cloud judgement and increase risky behavior

If these higher risk activities are done, the CDC is suggesting a two-week quarantine for participants to assure they do not acquire Covid-19 and spread it to others.

Lower risk activities include:

- Carving/decorating pumpkins with members of your own family
- Carving/decorating pumpkins with close friends outside while maintaining social distancing
- Having a Halloween scavenger hunt in your neighborhood with a list of Halloween-themed items to look for while walking outdoors
- Having a virtual Halloween costume contest
- Having a Halloween movie night with your family

The CDC does not recommend handing out candy. Some creative communities are having drive-through versions of trunk-or-treat where the people giving out candy hand

out pre-packaged bags as the cars drive through without candy recipients ever getting out of the cars. Though still a risk, if the people packaging the candy are very careful, the risk is lower than other activities.

The Brevard Police Department has spoken to representatives of the neighborhoods that have traditionally given out candy on Halloween and suggested not doing traditional trick-or-treat for this year. Chief Phil Harris said, “Transylvania County residents have done a great job of keeping the spread of Covid-19 under control. Every resident deserves credit for this. Halloween is a special time of year for our kids, but the risk of doing traditional trick-or-treat activities is too great to ignore. We are asking that parents seek other activities and options that are more easily managed than traditional trick-or-treating. We will not close the streets as we have in the past to discourage these activities. The risk of spreading Covid-19 is too great to ignore.”

The Heart of Brevard has already planned events that fill the need for safe events suggested by the CDC. Halloweenfest, the popular fall festival held in Downtown Brevard is going virtual this October with a creative spin. This year’s events will include a weekend of online activities including an online costume contest, make-up and pumpkin carving tutorials, and special interview with a Vampire, Transylvania’s own, Dracula. Halloweenfest activities will run October 30 and run through November 1.

The Heart of Brevard is excited to partner with the Transylvania Times to promote the annual Pumpkin Carving Contest. For the first time in the competition’s history, downtown merchants are invited to participate by displaying their decorated pumpkins at their business downtown for judging.

More information on our website: <https://www.brevardnc.org/halloweenfest/> and Halloweenfest Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/heartofbrevard>

There are also a number of churches and organizations considering versions of trunk-or-treat events. Keep your eyes on Social Media and T-Times for further information.

Elaine Russell, Transylvania County Health Director, added this statement: “However your family chooses to celebrate Halloween this year, the most important consideration is avoiding contact with people outside your immediate household. Yes, there is some risk of contracting COVID-19 from shared bowls of candy, but the much bigger risk comes from children and adults gathering together in groups. We completely support the City of Brevard’s decision to not close the streets for group trick-or-treating this year, as we believe there is a serious risk of spreading COVID-19 in that setting.

“As always, we strongly urge everyone to wear a cloth face covering at all times in public and stay six feet away from anyone that doesn’t live in the same household. If your family does participate in any trick-or-treat type activities, be sure that everyone washes their hands before eating candy.”

