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| **Press Release**  **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | Tim Jones | tim.jones@heartoftexashealthcare.org  325-597-2901 |

**Enjoy a Safe and Spooky Halloween This Year**

*Local healthcare officials offer tips for creative and safe Halloween celebrations.*

BRADY, Texas (Oct 26, 2020) – The year’s most frightful evening is around the corner. Although everyone is urged to take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, that doesn’t mean families can’t enjoy a fun and spooky Halloween.

To help everyone stay safe and healthy this year, Heart of Texas Healthcare System is offering health and safety tips for this year’s Halloween celebration.

“Everyone deserves to have a little fun this year,” said Lonnie L. Vickers, MD, Fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians at Brady Medical Clinic, a service of Heart of Texas Healthcare System. “Taking steps to protect your health and safety is more important than ever this year. Fortunately, with a little creativity you and your family can stay safe and enjoy the tricks and treats of Halloween.”

**Postpone the group gatherings until next Halloween**

COVID-19 remains a threat this fall, and health officials have warned that the number of new cases in our state could rise as the weather begins to cool. Taking everyday steps to slow the spread can make a difference.

Although costume parties are often a staple of Halloween, everyone is urged to avoid large group gatherings to avoid the spread of the dangerous coronavirus. Instead, have a party at home with your family – or host a virtual costume party with friends over an online platform.

**Enjoy a scary movie with your family**

A great way to get into the spirit of the season is to watch a classic scary movie with your family. Weather permitting, grab some popcorn and set up an outdoor screening of your favorite spooky film. Focusing on family this year is the safest way to ensure that everyone stays safe and enjoys a fun evening together.

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**Try a fun and safe twist on trick-or-treating**

Going door to door for trick-or-treating is not recommended this year due to the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19. Instead, try a new creative activity to do at home.

One great idea is to organize a Halloween treats hunt in your backyard like you would an Easter egg hunt.

Rather than going door to door, children dressed in costume can search for treats at home, turning Halloween into a fun scavenger hunt with plenty of photo ops.

**If you do go out, do so carefully**

For those who choose to trick-or-treat this year, take caution. Make sure everyone in your group practices social distancing and wears a mask. Consider going for a costume walk to view others’ costumes from afar and to show off yours rather than going to people’s doorsteps for treats. This helps minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19 while still allowing you and your family to enjoy spending time in the neighborhood.

Everyone is encouraged to wear a mask in public to prevent the spread of the disease. Fortunately, masks are a common component of a Halloween costume. Make one part of yours!

If you choose to give out treats, consider leaving them outside rather than answering the door to give it out. Better yet, also leave a bottle of hand sanitizer with the bowl of treats so that children can sanitize their hands before taking a treat.

“Taking steps to protect ourselves and each other will ensure that we can enjoy great Halloween celebrations in the future,” Dr. Vickers said. “With a little creativity, we can make this year’s Halloween safe and memorable for everyone.”

To learn more about healthcare services or to schedule an appointment at Brady Medical Clinic, call 325-597-2114.

**About Heart of Texas Healthcare System**Heart of Texas Healthcare System provides healthcare for residents of McCulloch County and the surrounding area. Founded in 2011, the system offers a wealth of medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, a clinical laboratory, dialysis services, physical therapy, surgical services, patient education, sleep studies, and more. The system also owns and operates Brady Medical Clinic, which provides family medicine, preventive care, and acute care for minor emergencies. For additional information, please visit www.heartoftexashealthcare.org.

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