

# How To Prevent Halloween Howls

Halloween is a frightful holiday to begin with, making the occasion anything but Fear Free® for your pet. However, even amidst all the spooky spectacles, there are still ways you can reduce anxiety for your furry friend.

## Secure the Door

Place pets behind a gate, on a leash, or in a crate or pet proofed room to prevent escapes when the door opens. Also ensure pets are wearing collars with ID tags and are microchipped!

## Ditch the Doorbell

With so much action at the door, your pet's mood can range from territorial to curious. Consider covering the doorbell and opting for a motion-sensor to alert you before trick-or-treaters reach the door.

## Safe Handouts

Consider handing out candy from a garage or set out a self-serve station if your pet is on edge or anxious when people come to the door.

## Comfy Costumes

Some pets simply prefer not to wear costumes. Watch their body language—if their head or tail drops, or they paw at the outfit, skip dressing up. Let them sniff and explore costume pieces first, rewarding curiosity with treats or toys.

If your pet seems comfortable, try the costume on early to check fit and safety. Soft, vest-style outfits that fasten around the chest or waist are usually best. Keep sessions brief, reward during fittings, and remove costumes when unsupervised. For a low-stress alternative, try a bandanna, bowtie, or themed toy.

## Trunk or Treat Option

Consider hosting a Trunk or Treat in your community parking lot, where kids can safely collect candy from car to car while pets stay comfortable at home. You can also turn your driveway or sidewalk into a fun, pet-friendly spot to hand out treats without the stress.

## Stay in Tune with Your Pet

If your pet is less social, set up a quiet, pet-safe room stocked with favorite toys, treats, and chews. Drown out outside noise with soothing sounds, species-specific music, classical or reggae. Let your pet explore this space ahead of time and settle them there about an hour before trick-or-treaters arrive.

## Distraction Wins

Use food puzzles or stuffed toys to keep pets happily occupied. Hunting for treats or meals keeps them focused and content.

## Pair Scary with Sweet

Reward calm behavior with tasty treats—soft eye contact or relaxing on their bed are great moments to reinforce. Ask for simple cues like “sit” or “down” and reward calm participation.

## Hidden Hazards

Keep candy out of reach. Chocolate, raisins, macadamia nuts, and xylitol (found in sugar-free candy and gum) are toxic to pets.



## Plan Ahead

Ask your vet about calming aids if your pet struggles with fear, anxiety, or stress. The right support can ease their worries and help them stay calm during stressful events.

