

Guidance for Face Coverings

There is some evidence suggesting the use of Face Coverings by the public could slow the spread of COVID-19. Face Coverings may reduce the spread of infectious particles when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes. Individuals can spread COVID-19 even if they feel well.

Wearing a Face Covering should not replace other evidence-based defenses which include practicing physical distancing, staying home when sick and avoiding contact with people who are sick, washing hands frequently, and avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

When are Face Coverings required?

- You are required to wear a Face Covering any time you are within 6 feet of anyone you do not live with. For example, you have to wear a Face Covering when visiting a business like a grocery store, pharmacy, or retail outlet, and while riding public transportation.
- You are not required to wear a Face Covering if you are not going to be within 6 feet of anyone you do not live with. For example, you don't have to wear a Face Covering when you are outside walking, running, or biking if you are alone. You may choose to wear a Face Covering even when it is not required.
- You should carry a Face Covering with you anytime there is a chance that you might be unable to keep 6 feet of distance between yourself and people you don't live with.
- If you have, live with, or are caring for someone with or likely to have COVID-19, refer to [Home Isolation Instructions for People with Coronavirus-2019 \(COVID-19\) Infection](#) for additional information about Face Coverings.

Who should NOT wear Face Coverings?

- People who may have difficulty taking off a Face Covering by themselves, including children under 2 years (due to increased risk of suffocation, strangulation, or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/SIDS) and people who are unconscious or incapacitated in any way
- People who have trouble breathing
- People who have a medical reason why they cannot wear a face covering (though reasonable alternatives should be sought in this case)
- Wearing face coverings while exercising is also not recommended.

How should a Face Covering be worn?

- Wash your hands before and after putting on and taking off your Face Covering.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when putting on and taking off your Face Covering.
- Discard of used disposable Face Coverings in the trash after each use. Place used reusable Face Coverings in a bag or bin until they can be washed.
- Do not share Face Coverings with others, even people you live with.

What are different types of Face Coverings?

Face Coverings used by the public should:

- Cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Be secured to the head with ties, straps, or ear loops, or wrapped around the lower face
- Include multiple layers while allowing for breathing without restriction
- Be able to be cleaned regularly without damage or change to shape

Cloth Face Coverings

- Cloth Face Coverings can be made from a variety of fabrics, such as cotton, silk, or linen. They may be factory-made, sewn by hand, or improvised from household items such as bandanas, neck gaiters, scarves, or tightly woven fabrics, such as cotton t-shirts and some types of towels.
- Wash new Cloth Face Coverings before you wear them, and after each use or at least once a day. Place used Cloth Face Coverings in a bag or bin until they can be washed. Wash with detergent and hot water.
- Discard Cloth Face Coverings that have stretched out or no longer stay over your nose and mouth, have damaged ties or straps, or have holes or tears in the fabric.

Medical respirators and face masks

- The public should not purchase or use respirators (N-95 masks) or surgical masks intended for the healthcare setting. Medical respirators and surgical masks are critical supplies that must be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Face shields

- Face shields consist of a clear plastic barrier that covers the face.
- Face shields may be worn by people who are unable to wear other types of face coverings for medical or other reasons.
- Face shields can be made from materials found in craft or office supply stores.
- Face shields should extend to below the chin, cover the ears, and have no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece
- Face shields should be cleaned with soap and water between each use.