

What are cloth face coverings?

Cloth face coverings can be homemade or manufactured. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not regulate cloth face coverings, and they are not considered Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as surgical/medical masks or N95 respirators.

Why should you wear cloth face coverings?

The SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 spreads through droplets that are generated during coughing, sneezing and talking. These droplets can travel up to six feet. Viruses that land on surfaces can remain infectious to others for hours to days. If someone touches a contaminated surface and then touches their nose, eyes, or mouth, they may get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.

Because of the ways that COVID can be spread, physical distancing, washing hands or using hand sanitizer, and disinfecting surfaces are important ways to reduce the spread of the virus.

Importantly, studies have shown that people infected with SARS-CoV-2 can spread the virus in the two days before getting symptoms. In addition, some people can be infected with SARS-CoV-2 and never get symptoms but may still spread the virus to others. To reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2 from people infected with COVID-19 who are either with or without symptoms, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) recommends the use of cloth face coverings in public settings, including indoor settings like grocery stores, pharmacies, etc., and in outdoor settings where social distancing of at least 6 feet cannot be consistently maintained. Physical distancing, regular hand washing, and cleaning frequently touched surfaces continues to be recommended.

Cloth face coverings help protect the public from those that may be infected with COVID-19 and protect those infected with COVID-19 from spreading the disease to others.

Importantly, even when wearing cloth facial coverings, physical distancing of at least six feet should be maintained whenever possible, when around people outside of your household.

Who should and who should not wear cloth face coverings?

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) recommends the use of cloth face coverings when around people that do not live in your household and in public settings, including indoor settings such as grocery stores, pharmacies, etc., and outdoor settings where social distancing of at least six feet cannot be consistently maintained.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under the age of two, anyone with difficulty breathing, anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or unable to remove the covering without assistance.

Cloth facial coverings are not recommended for people working in healthcare when PPE is indicated. In these settings, surgical masks or N-95 respirators are recommended by the CDC. Cloth face coverings may be used by HCP for source control in certain situations.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html>

Which materials can be used to construct cloth face coverings?

Multiple materials can be used for cloth facial coverings. At least two layers of cloth with a tight weave (high thread count) are recommended. CDC has recommendations for making cloth facial coverings from bandanas and from other fabrics at their website: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html

How should a cloth face cover fit?

The face covering should:

- Fit snugly against the face so that there are no large gaps between the face and the mask.
- The mask should cover the nose and mouth from the bridge of the nose down to the chin, and it should extend beyond the corners of the mouth so that no gaps occur when talking or moving.
- Fit securely using either the strings attached to the covering that tie behind the head or elastic that loops around both ears.
- Allow breathing without any restrictions.
- Be easy to wash and machine dry without causing any changes to the material.

More information on making and wearing cloth facial coverings can be found at: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html.

Washing cloth face coverings

After each use, face coverings require washing in hot water with regular detergent and should be dried completely on a hot dryer setting.

Resources for making cloth face coverings

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html>

Videos:

- How to Make Your own Face Covering CDC https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPx1yqvJgf4&feature=emb_title
- Face Mask Kit <https://vimeo.com/399324367/13cd93f150>
- DIY Masks - American Sign Language <https://youtu.be/t9cnxxsEKpk>

Written Instructions:

- How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- How to Make A Face Mask <https://www.allinahealth.org/-/media/allina-health/files/mask-sewing-how-to.pdf>
- DIY Cloth Face Mask <https://www.instructables.com/id/DIY-Cloth-Face-Mask/>

References

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2. Transmission of 2019-nCoV Infection from an Asymptomatic Contact in Germany
<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2001468>
3. SARS-CoV-2 Viral Load in Upper Respiratory Specimens of Infected Patients
<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2001737>
4. Asymptomatic Cases in a Family Cluster with SARS-CoV-2 Infection
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(20\)30114-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(20)30114-6/fulltext)
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<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2762028>
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<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6913e1.htm>
7. Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>
8. Substantial Undocumented Infection Facilitates the Rapid Dissemination of Novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV2)
<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/03/24/science.abb3221/>
9. Filtering Efficiency of Different Fabric Types
<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acsnano.0c03252>
10. Masks Prevent Infections in Business Setting
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6928e2.htm?s_cid=mm6928e2_w
11. Mask Wearing in Communities Reduces Community Spread
[https://www.journalofinfection.com/article/S0163-4453\(20\)30235-8/fulltext](https://www.journalofinfection.com/article/S0163-4453(20)30235-8/fulltext)
12. Overview of SARS-CoV-2 transmission, diagnosis, and treatments
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2768391>