

# Cloth Face Coverings

*On April 4th, the CDC released updated guidance recommending the use of cloth face coverings whenever people are in a community setting.*

Public Health



Prevent • Promote • Protect

## **CLOTH FACE COVERINGS ARE NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING, STAYING HOME, WASHING YOUR HANDS AND OTHER PREVENTIVE MEASURES!**

**Our best defense against COVID-19 is to continue strong preventive measures:**

- **Maintain Social Distancing of at least 6 feet** if you must go out in public
- **Stay at Home** unless you need to leave to provide or receive an essential service
- **Wash your hands** frequently with soap and water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid being around sick people

### **Why is the CDC recommending the use of Cloth Face Coverings?**

- Wearing a cloth face covering is being recommended by the CDC because of new data that shows the virus can be spread by people who do not have symptoms
- **Wearing a cloth face covering will not protect you from getting the virus**
- The primary purpose of wearing a cloth face covering is to reduce the release of germs into the air when you speak, cough, or sneeze
- Wearing a cloth face covering may help protect others from germs you may be spreading without knowing it, including people who unknowingly have COVID-19 but feel well

### **What is a "Cloth Face Covering"?**

- A cloth face covering is a material that covers the nose and mouth while being secured to the head with ties, straps, or simply wrapped around the lower face. These coverings can be made from a variety of materials.

### **When should I wear a cloth face covering?**

- You should wear a cloth face covering **if you must leave your home to provide or receive an essential service**, such as going to work, the grocery store, pharmacy, or enjoying outdoor activities while maintaining social distance
- **If you are sick (have a cough/sneezing) or have seasonal allergies** you need to wear a cloth face covering when around other people to protect them from your coughs/sneezes

### **Do I still need to maintain 6 feet social distance from other people when I am wearing a cloth face covering?**

- **YES!** While wearing a cloth face covering is an additional public health measure that people can take to reduce the spread of COVID-19, it **IS NOT** a substitute for social distancing, frequent hand washing, and other preventive actions.

### **Who should not wear cloth face coverings?**

- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:
  - children younger than 2 years of age
  - anyone who has trouble breathing
  - anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance

### **Why is the CDC recommending cloth face coverings instead of medical grade face masks?**

- Medical grade surgical face masks and N95 respirators are in short supply and **MUST** be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders

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**Things to keep in mind if you choose to wear a cloth face covering/mask:**

**When wearing a cloth face covering/mask:**

- Wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, before putting on a mask
- Make sure the mask fits snugly but comfortably
  - It should cover your mouth and nose, with no gaps between your face and the mask
- Do not touch your mask while wearing it
  - If you do touch the mask, wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- If your mask gets damp, replace it with a new one
- Always wear your cloth reusable mask with the same side facing outwards
- If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face
- When taking off your cloth face covering/mask, be careful to not touch your eyes, nose and mouth
  - After removing the mask, immediately wash your hands

**To clean your cloth face covering/mask:**

- Wash your cloth face covering frequently, ideally after each use, or at least daily
- Have a bag or bin to keep cloth face coverings in until they can be laundered with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot/high heat cycle

**How can I get a cloth face covering/mask?**

- **DO NOT buy a surgical mask to use as a face covering-these are in short supply and MUST be reserved for our healthcare workers and first responders!**
- If you need a cloth mask but do not have access to one, you may be able to make your own
- There is no standard design for homemade cloth masks, but there are many patterns and instructions online from the CDC and hospitals

**If you make your own cloth face covering/mask, keep in mind:**

- Build a mask that fits snugly around the nose and mouth, from the bridge of the nose down to the chin, and extends onto the cheek beyond the corners of the mouth, so no gaps occur when talking or moving
- Use mask material that is tightly woven but breathable
  - Possibly double-layer the fabric
  - Masks must be made from washable fabric
  - Choose a fabric that can handle high temperatures and bleach without shrinking or losing its shape
- The mask should be tolerant of expected amounts of moisture from breathing

**More Information & Resources:**

**CDC Guidance on Cloth Face Coverings:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

**WI DHS: Should I Wear a Cloth Face Mask (scroll to the bottom of the page):**

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/protect.htm>

**Sauk County Public Health: Cloth Face Coverings/Masks:** <https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/publichealth/cloth-face-coverings>