

Cloth Face Covering Guidance

Our best defense against COVID-19 is washing our hands frequently, avoiding touching our eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, avoiding being around sick people and physical distancing, especially by staying at home.

There is limited evidence to suggest that use of cloth face coverings by the public during a pandemic could help reduce disease transmission. Their primary role is to reduce the release of infectious particles into the air when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes, including someone who has COVID-19 but feels well. Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing and washing hands and staying home when ill, but they may be helpful when combined with these primary interventions.

When Should I Wear a Cloth Face Covering?

You should wear a cloth face covering when you are:

- outside the home conducting essential activities such as going to work, to the grocery store, pharmacy, banking and enjoying outdoor activities while maintaining physical distancing.
- If you are sick (have a cough or are sneezing) or have seasonal allergies you should wear a cloth face cover when around other people to protect them from your sneezes.

How Should I Wear a Cloth Face Cover?

To wear a cloth face covering, keep these things in mind:

- Before putting on a cloth face covering, clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Make sure your cloth face covering covers your mouth and nose with no gaps between your face and the cloth face covering.
- Do not touch your cloth face covering while wearing it; if you do, clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Replace the cloth face covering with a new one as soon as it is damp.
- Always wear your reusable cloth face covering with the same side facing outwards.
- Keep in mind that a cloth face covering does not provide full protection. Therefore, remember to continue to do the following:
 - Clean your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
 - Continue staying at least 6 feet away from other people.
 - Continue following the recommendations for social distancing: avoid crowds, stay at home as much as possible, and leave for essential tasks only (e.g. work, grocery shopping, going to the doctor, getting medications).

How Can I Get a Cloth Face Covering?

If you need a cloth face covering but do not have access to one, you may be able to make your own cloth face covering by sewing one. There is no standard design for homemade cloth face coverings, but there are many patterns and instructions online from hospitals and other organizations.

If making your own cloth face covering, keep the following in mind:

- Build a cloth mask covering that tightly encloses the area around the nose and mouth, from the bridge of the nose down to the chin, and extending onto the cheek beyond the corners of the mouth, so no gaps occur when talking or moving.
- Use cloth mask covering material that is tightly woven but breathable. Possibly double-layer the fabric.
- Cloth mask coverings must be made from washable fabric.
- Choose a fabric that can handle high temperatures and bleach without shrinking or otherwise deforming.
- The cloth face covering should be tolerant of expected amounts of moisture from breathing.

Suggested materials- outer layer tea cloth, inner layer of a microfleece to wick away moisture, and an inner tea cloth layer. Use an accordion fold to mimic a hospital mask as much as possible and use a flat woven shoelace type material to bind the sides (such as quilt binding). For straps, use elastic straps that loop behind the ears.

When Should I Clean My Cloth Face Covering?

How should I clean my cloth face covering?

It's a good idea to 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 cycle. 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.