



CLOTH FACE MASK FAQS

1. Why do you need to wear a cloth face mask?

In light of new data about [how COVID-19 spreads](#), along with evidence of widespread COVID-19 illness in communities across the country, the CDC recommends that people wear a [cloth face mask](#) to cover their nose and mouth in the community setting. This is to protect people around you if you are infected but do not have symptoms.

2. We don't typically wear cloth face masks for the flu. Why are we doing it for COVID-19?

There is still so much we don't know about COVID-19. For the flu, we have vaccines and approved treatments that can lessen its severity. While we are still learning about COVID-19, and working on the development of a treatment and vaccine, the use of a cloth face mask can prevent the spread of COVID-19, especially by people who are infected but do not have symptoms.

3. What is the proper way to wear a cloth face mask?

Cloth face masks should fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face. They can be secured with ties or ear loops. They should consist of multiple layers of fabric, but allow for breathing without restriction. Finally, cloth face masks should be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

4. Who should NOT wear cloth face masks?

Cloth face masks should not be placed on children younger than two years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

5. When should you wear a cloth face mask?

A cloth face mask should be worn whenever people are in a community setting. These settings include grocery stores and pharmacies. Cloth face masks are especially important to wear in public in areas of widespread COVID-19 illness.

6. Do I still need to stay six feet away from others if I am wearing a cloth face mask?

Yes. Wearing cloth face masks is an additional public health measure people should take to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The CDC still recommends that you stay at least six feet away from other people (social distancing), wash your hands frequently, clean and disinfect often, cover coughs and sneezes, and stay home if you are sick. A cloth face mask is not intended to protect the wearer, but it may prevent the spread of virus from the wearer to others. This is especially important if someone is infected with COVID-19 but does not have symptoms.

7. What if I can't find a mask to wear?

Cloth face masks can be made from household items or from common materials at low cost. For instructions on easy-to-make sewn and no-sew masks, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

8. Do I have to shave my beard to properly wear a cloth face mask?

No, you do not need to shave your beard to properly wear a cloth face mask. This only applies to N-95 masks, which are worn by health care providers. Beards can affect the seal on this type of mask.

9. How often do I need to wash a cloth face mask?

Currently, there is no standard for how often you should wash your cloth face mask. They should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use, at least as often as you change and wash your clothes. If possible, try to have two masks so you can switch them out on a regular basis.

10. How should you wash a cloth face mask?

A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a cloth face mask.

11. How does one safely remove a used cloth face mask?

Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing their cloth face mask, and wash hands immediately after removing.