COVID-19: How to choose, use and care for a mask

✔ Do

Consider the different types of masks available for public use:
› non-medical masks
› medical masks
› respirators

Improve the fit of your mask by:
› adjusting the flexible nosepiece
› adjusting the ear loops, ties or bands so that the mask fits snugly against your face

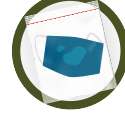Store your mask in a clean paper or cloth bag if you plan to wear it again.

Choose a mask that's clean, dry and damage free.

If wearing a non-medical mask, choose one that's made of multiple breathable layers, including:
› at least 2 layers of tightly woven fabric and
› a third middle filter layer

Change your mask when it's dirty, damp or damaged, and keep it out of reach of others.
› Store soiled reusable non-medical masks in a waterproof bag or container until they can be cleaned.

Choose a mask that fits well and fully covers your nose, mouth and chin.
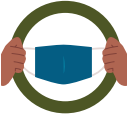
Keep your mask on except when:
› eating or drinking
› communicating with someone who is hard of hearing or who reads lips

Wash reusable non-medical masks (in a washing machine or by hand) with hot, soapy water, and dry completely before wearing again.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before and after touching or removing a mask.

If you have to remove your mask:
› put it back on as soon as possible
› ensure other measures are in place, such as:
  • physical distancing
  • choosing a well-ventilated or outdoor space to communicate in

Throw dirty, damp or damaged disposable masks and used filters in the garbage or use a mask recycling program if one is available.

Use the ties, bands or ear loops to put on and take off your mask.

✘ Don't

Don't put a mask on:
› children under 2
› someone who has significant trouble breathing while wearing the mask
› someone who needs help to remove it

Don't hang your mask from your neck or ears, or place it under your chin.

Don't use a:
› mask with exhalation valves or vents.
› scarf, bandana, neck gaiter or face shield instead of a mask.

Dont reuse a disposable mask that's dirty, damp or damaged.

Don't touch the front of your mask.

Don't share masks.

Protect yourself and others

When layered with other recommended public health measures, a well-constructed, well-fitting and properly worn mask can help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Make wearing a mask a part of your regular routine.

Follow local public health advice on when you should wear a mask. Masks may be recommended or required in public settings like:
› stores
› schools
› businesses
› workplaces
› public transit

Even if masks aren't required, wearing a mask is an added layer of protection. Whether you're vaccinated or not, you should consider wearing one in shared spaces with people from outside of your immediate household. This is important especially indoors, whether in private or public settings.

Masks are strongly recommended in any crowded setting, including settings with vaccination requirements.

Regardless of your vaccination status, continue to layer individual public health measures, including:
› staying home when sick
› improving indoor ventilation
› maximizing your physical distance when you are with people from outside of your immediate household
› covering your coughs and sneezes
› washing or sanitizing your hands regularly
› cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and objects

This advice is intended for the general public and is **not** intended for occupational health purposes, including health care settings.

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