CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings

Updated July 6, 2020   Print

Cloth face coverings are an additional step to help slow the spread of COVID-19 when combined with every day preventive actions and social distancing in public settings.

- **Who should NOT use cloth face coverings**: children under age 2, or anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- **Cloth face coverings are NOT surgical masks or N95 respirators.** Currently, surgical masks and N95 respirators are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.

Wear your Face Covering Correctly

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
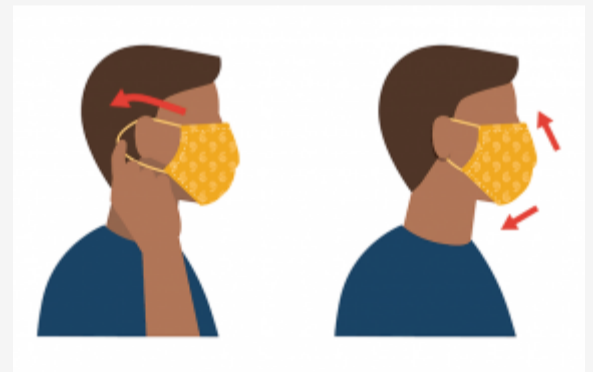
Wear a Face Covering to Protect Others

- Wear a face covering that covers your nose and mouth to help protect others in case you're infected with COVID-19 but don't have symptoms
- Wear a face covering in public settings when around people who don't live in your household, especially when it may be difficult for you to stay six feet apart
- Wear a face covering correctly for maximum protection
- **Don't** put the face covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- **Don't** touch the face covering, and, if you do, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer to disinfect

Follow Everyday Health Habits

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds each time
- Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
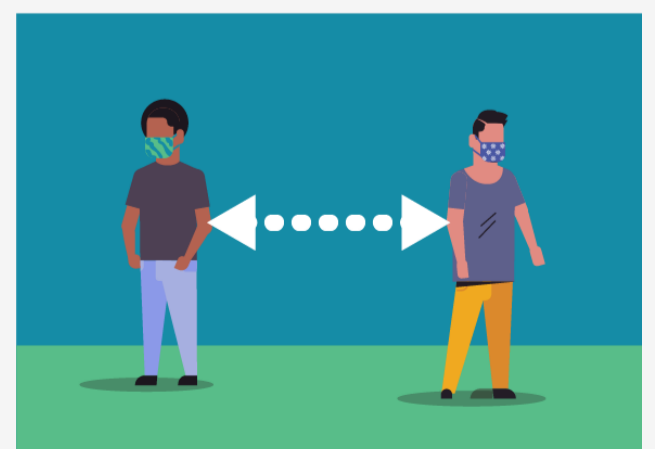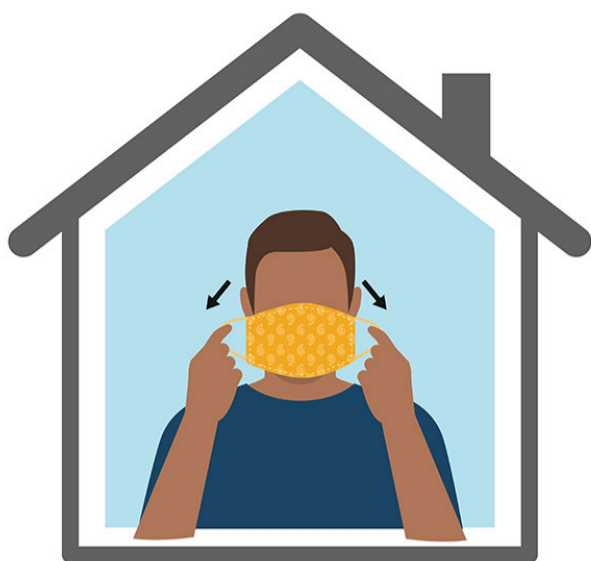
Take Off Your Cloth Face Covering Carefully, When You're Home

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together
- Place covering in the washing machine (learn more about how to wash cloth face coverings)
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing and wash hands immediately after removing.

More Information

Considerations for Wearing Cloth Face Coverings

How to Wear Your Cloth Face Covering

How to Wash Your Cloth Face Covering

How to Make Your Own Cloth Face Covering

ASL Video Series: Easy DIY Cloth Face Covering

How to Make Your Own Face Covering Video (Spanish)

Page last reviewed: July 6, 2020

COVID-2019 Menu

- Coronavirus Home
- Your Health
- Community, Work & School
- Healthcare Workers
- Laboratories
- Health Departments
- Cases, Data & Surveillance
- More Resources