

COVID-19

ACT NOW!



Your Guide to Masks

Updated Jan. 30, 2021 [Print](#)

CDC recommends that people wear masks in public settings, at events and gatherings, and anywhere they will be around other people. Effective February 2, 2021, **masks are required** on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.

How to Select

When selecting a mask, there are many choices. Here are some do's and don'ts.

DO choose masks that

DO NOT choose Masks that



Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric



Are made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, for example, vinyl



Completely cover your nose and mouth



Have exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape



Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps



Are intended for healthcare workers, including N95 respirators or surgical masks

Special Considerations

Gaiters & face shields



Wear a gaiter with two layers, or fold it to make two layers



Not recommended: Evaluation of face shields is ongoing, but effectiveness is unknown at this time.

Glasses



If you wear glasses, find a mask that fits closely over your nose or one that has a nose wire to limit fogging.

Children



Find a mask that is made for children to help ensure proper fit



Check to be sure the mask fits snugly over the nose and mouth and under the chin and that there are no gaps around the sides



Do NOT put on children younger than 2 years old

Cold weather gear



Wear your scarf, ski mask or balaclava over your mask



Scarves, ski masks and balaclavas are not substitutes for masks

How to Wear

Wear a mask **correctly** and **consistently** for the best protection.

- Be sure to [wash your hands or use hand sanitizer](#) before putting on a mask.
- Do **NOT** touch the mask when wearing it. If you have to often touch/adjust your mask, it doesn't fit you properly, and you may need to find a different mask or make adjustments.

For more information, visit our [How to Wear Masks](#) web page.

Do wear a mask that



- Covers your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Fits snugly against the sides of your face.

How NOT to wear a mask



Around your neck



On Your forehead



Under your nose



Only on your nose



On your chin



Dangling from one ear



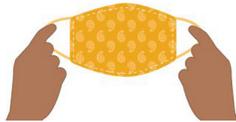
On your arm

How to Take off a Mask



①

Carefully, untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops



②

Handle only by the earloops or ties



③

Fold the outside corners together



④

Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing and wash hands immediately after removing

How to Clean



Reusable masks should be washed regularly. Always [remove masks correctly](#) and [wash your hands](#) after handling or touching a used mask.

- Include your mask with your regular laundry
- Use regular laundry detergent and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth used to make the mask
- Use the highest heat setting and leave in the dryer until completely dry

For more information, visit our [How to Wash Masks](#) web page.

For more information, see our [Masks](#) web site. For information on the sources for our mask guidance, see [Recent Studies](#).

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Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#), Division of Viral Diseases