



# COVID-19

**Get Vaccinated:** [Find a vaccine](#) and learn what you can do after you're [fully vaccinated](#).

## Your Guide to Masks

Updated Apr. 6, 2021

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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



Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric



Completely cover your nose and mouth



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



Have a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask

### DO NOT choose masks that



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



Have exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape



Are prioritized for healthcare workers, including N95 respirators

## 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.

### 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

### People with beards

Certain types of facial hair, like beards, can make mask fitting difficult. Masks that fit well protect you better. To have a better fit, people with beards can shave their beards or trim their beards close to the face.

#### Other ways to improve fit



Use a mask fitter or brace.



Wear one disposable mask underneath a cloth mask that has multiple layers of fabric. The second mask should push the edges of the inner mask against the face and beard.

For people with beards that are not trimmed close to the face, masks may fit loosely around the beard. However, people with beards should still wear a mask. Masks designed for people with beards are being evaluated, and information will be provided when it becomes available.

For more information on evidence for effectiveness of masks, other types of face protection, and mask alternatives, see [Guidance for Wearing 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



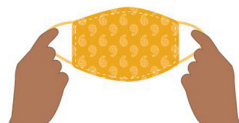
On your arm

## How to take off a mask



①

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



②

Handle only by the ear loops 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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