

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



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Your Health

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YOUR HEALTH

How to Select, Wear, and Clean Your Mask

Updated Oct. 29, 2020

Languages Print



CDC recommends that people wear masks in public settings, like on public and mass transportation, at events and gatherings, and anywhere they will be around other people.

Overview

- Wear masks with two or more layers to stop the spread of COVID-19
- Wear the mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Masks should be worn by people two years and older
- Masks should NOT be worn by children younger than two, people who have trouble breathing, or people who cannot remove the mask without assistance
- Do **NOT** wear masks intended for healthcare workers, for example, N95 respirators
- CDC does not recommend the use of face shields alone. Evaluation of face shields is ongoing but effectiveness is unknown at this time.
- Evaluation of mask and gaiter materials and structure is ongoing.

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
<p>Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric</p>	<p>Are made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, for example, vinyl</p>
<p>Completely cover your nose and mouth</p>	<p>Have exhalation valves or vents, which allow virus particles to escape</p>
<p>Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps</p>	<p>Are intended for healthcare workers, including N95 respirators or surgical masks</p>

Gaiters & Face Shields	Special Situations: Children
<p>Wear a gaiter with two layers, or fold it to make two layers</p>	<p>If you are able, find a mask that is made for children</p>
<p>Caution: Evaluation is ongoing but effectiveness is unknown at this time</p>	<p>If you can't find a mask made for children, check to be sure the mask fits snugly over the nose and mouth and under the chin</p>
<p>Special Situations: Glasses If you wear glasses, find a mask that fits closely over your nose or one that has a nose wire to limit fogging</p>	<p>Do NOT put on children younger than 2 years old</p>

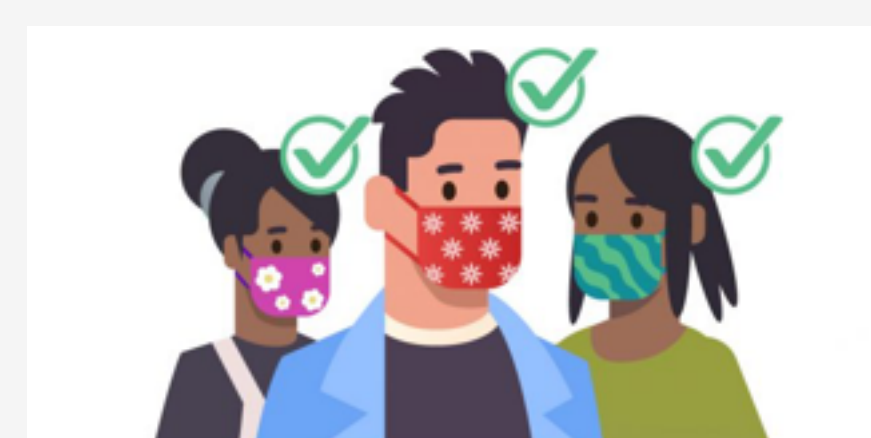
How to Wear

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

- Be sure to wash your hands before putting on a mask
- Do **NOT** touch the mask when wearing it

Do wear a mask that

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



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

How NOT to wear a mask

How NOT to wear a mask

How to take off a mask

How to take off a mask

How to Clean

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](#).

Last Updated Oct. 29, 2020

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

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