

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

How to Protect Yourself & Others

Updated April 24, 2020

[Print Page](#)

Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing serious complications from COVID-19 illness. More information on [Are you at higher risk for serious illness](#).



Know how it spreads

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- **The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**
- The virus is thought to [spread mainly from person-to-person](#).
 - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
 - These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
 - Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

Everyone Should



Wash your hands often

- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- It's especially important to wash:
 - Before eating or preparing food
 - Before touching your face
 - After using the restroom
 - After leaving a public place
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - After handling your cloth face covering
 - After changing a diaper
 - After caring for someone sick
 - After touching animals or pets
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.



Avoid close contact

- [Inside your home](#): Avoid close contact with people who are sick

- **Inside your home:** Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- **Outside your home:** Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household.
 - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
 - [Stay at least 6 feet \(about 2 arms' length\) from other people.](#)
 - Keeping distance from others is especially important for [people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.](#)



Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Everyone should wear a [cloth face cover](#) in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other [social distancing](#) measures are difficult to maintain.
 - Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker. Currently, surgical masks and N95 respirators are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.
- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.




Cover coughs and sneezes

- **Always cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Clean and disinfect

- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.** This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them.** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- **Then, use a household disinfectant.** Most common [EPA-registered household disinfectants](#)  will work.



Monitor Your Health Daily

- **Be alert for symptoms.** Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or [other symptoms of COVID-19.](#)
 - Especially important if you are [running essential errands](#), going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a [physical distance of 6 feet.](#)
- **Take your temperature** if symptoms develop.
 - Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.
- Follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings

Updated July 6, 2020

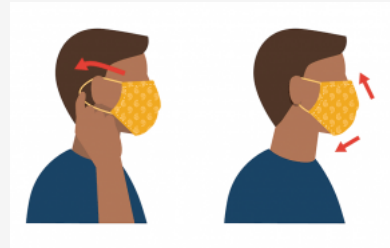
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Cloth face coverings are an additional step to help slow the spread of COVID-19 when combined with [every day preventive actions](#) and [social distancing](#) in public settings.

- **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

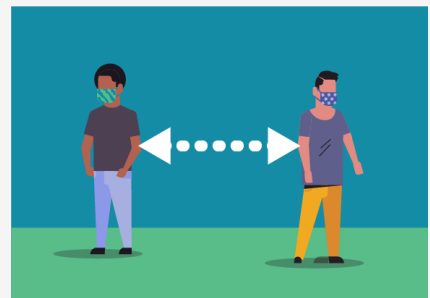


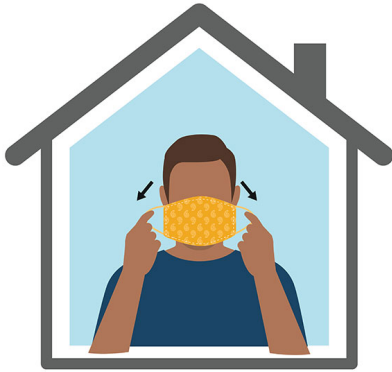
Use the Face Covering to Protect Others

- Wear a face covering to help protect others in case you're infected but don't have symptoms
- Wear the covering in public settings when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other [social distancing](#) measures are difficult to maintain
- **Don't** put the covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- **Don't** touch the face covering, and, if you do, wash your hands

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](#)