

## USE OF SIMPLE CLOTH FACE COVERINGS: HOW THEY HELP

For the Community

April 6, 2020

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now advising the use of **simple cloth face coverings** to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others as an additional, voluntary public health measure. Cloth face coverings should not be used by persons with confirmed Covid-19 in the community. For persons with suspected or confirmed Covid-19, surgical masks should be worn.

The CDC continues to study the spread and effects of the novel coronavirus across the United States. We now know from recent studies that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms.

In light of this new evidence, the CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission.

The cloth face coverings recommended **ARE NOT surgical masks or N-95 respirators**. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance. If you have surgical masks or N-95 respirators, and do not have suspected or confirmed Covid-19, please consider donating these resources to CHRISTUS St. Vincent for use in the medical setting.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

## HOW TO USE A CLOTH MASK

- Masks of any type are only effective when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with soap and water (20 seconds) or alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cloth masks should:
  - Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
  - Be secured with ties or ear loops
  - Include multiple layers of fabric
  - Allow for breathing without restriction
  - Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape
- If you wear a mask, you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly.
  - Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based rub or soap and water

- Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
- Avoid touching the mask while using it; and if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based rub or soap and water.
- Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp.
- To remove the mask, remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed bin; clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

## WHO SHOULD NOT USE CLOTH MASKS

- 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.
- Persons with confirmed Covid-19. Those with confirmed Covid-19 should use a surgical mask when in the presence of others without Covid-19 to protect those without.

Current CDC guidance requires medical/isolation masks for droplet precautions and PUI (non-aerosolizing procedures). N95 respirators are for airborne precautions, PUI (aerosolizing procedures), positive Covid-19 patients, and intubation. Extended use and reuse of medical/isolation masks as well as N95 respirators is encouraged.

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/standard-precautions.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/transmission-based-precautions.html>

## HOW TO CLEAN/SAFELY STERILIZE CLOTH MASKS

- A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a face covering.

## FOR SEW OR NO SEW INSTRUCTIONS

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

## HOW TO PUT ON AND TAKE OFF A MASK

HOW TO PUT ON, USE, TAKE OFF AND DISPOSE OF A MASK

**Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water**



HOW TO PUT ON, USE, TAKE OFF AND DISPOSE OF A MASK

**Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask**



HOW TO PUT ON, USE, TAKE OFF AND DISPOSE OF A MASK

**Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water**



HOW TO PUT ON, USE, TAKE OFF AND DISPOSE OF A MASK

**Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and do not re-use single-use masks**



HOW TO PUT ON, USE, TAKE OFF AND DISPOSE OF A MASK

**To remove the mask: remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed bin; clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water**

