Indiana State Department of Health
Epidemiology Resource Center

Wear a Mask to Protect Yourself and Others

WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. People with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including coughing and shortness of breath. Other symptoms include congestion or runny nose, diarrhea, fatigue, fever over 100.4 degrees, headache, muscle or body aches, nausea, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat and vomiting. The new coronavirus that causes COVID-19 isn't the same as other coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, such as the common cold. The risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases due to any of several underlying conditions and/or with age (those 65 and older are at highest risk).

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through respiratory droplets when an infected person breathes, coughs, sings, sneezes or talks. These droplets can be inhaled into a healthy person's airways, lungs, mouth or nose and infect that person, especially when the two people are in within about 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or longer in a 24-hour period (called close contact). It's also important to know that not everyone who has COVID-19 shows symptoms.

That's why wearing a face mask is important. It protects other people from infected droplets, and it offers you some protection, too, according to recent studies.

Less common ways the virus spreads are airborne transmission in enclosed spaces with poor circulation and touching your mouth, nose or possibly eyes after contact with contaminated surfaces.

The best way to protect yourself and to help reduce the virus's spread is to limit your interactions with other people as much as possible and take precautions when you do interact with others. Those steps include wearing a face covering, maintaining social distance of 6 feet and good hand hygiene.

If you start feeling sick and think you may have COVID-19, get in touch with your healthcare provider within 24 hours.

CLOTH MASKS AND OTHER NONMEDICAL FACE COVERINGS

All Hoosiers age 8 and older have been **required** to wear face coverings in most public settings since July 27 under Gov. Eric J. Holcomb's Executive Order 20-37, which was renewed with Executive Order 20-48. **Note that children younger than 2 years old should not wear a face covering due to the risk of suffocation, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**. It recommends that children 2-8 wear face coverings.

Other exceptions outlined to the face covering requirement in the executive order include people with disabilities, while drinking, eating, exercising and for medical purposes. Individuals who cannot wear a mask for health reasons should consider alternatives, such as face shields.

The executive order requires face coverings for anyone 8 years and older in:

For additional information, visit https://coronavirus.in.gov.

- Public indoor spaces and commercial entities
- Public outdoor spaces when it's impossible to socially distance from people not in your household
- Public transportation or other vehicle services such as a taxi or ride-share

Additionally, face coverings are required for in-person schools for students in the third grade and above, as well as faculty, staff, volunteers and anyone else in a school. Coverings are also required for cocurricular and extracurricular activities, with exceptions for strenuous physical activity.

About masks and where they must be worn

A mask or other face covering may be factory-made, sewn by hand or improvised from household items such as bandanas, scarves and T-shirts. The mouth and nose should be covered.

Cloth face coverings should:

- have two or more layers of breathable, tightly woven, washable fabric (cotton, cotton blends)
- completely cover your mouth and nose
- fit snugly but comfortably against the sides of your face without gaps
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- Do NOT wear masks intended for healthcare workers, for example, N95 respirators
- CDC does not recommend the use of face shields alone as effectiveness is unknown at this time.

Neck gaiters and exhalation valve masks

Some people wear a neck gaiter, or tube of fabric that can pulled on to rest on your shoulders and then be pulled up over your mouth and nostrils. The CDC says a gaiter should have two layers or be folded to create two layers. Also, evaluation of mask and gaiter materials and structure is ongoing.

The CDC does not recommend using masks with exhalation valves or vents because this type of mask may not prevent you from spreading COVID-19 to others. The hole in the material may let your respiratory droplets escape and reach others. Research about the effectiveness of these types of masks also is ongoing.

The CDC recommends other everyday actions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, such as avoiding people who are sick; avoiding touching your eyes, mouth or nose; and covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue.

If you're sick or get sick

People who have COVID-19 symptoms should stay home, keep track of your symptoms and contact your healthcare provider for guidance. Workers who have the flu should follow CDC guidelines and stay home while sick. Do not report to work if you are sick, develop COVID-19 symptoms or believe you may have been exposed by close contact.

If you develop symptoms at work, please leave and seek medical care or COVID-19 testing. You can get tested at your healthcare provider. You also can find a free Optum/LHI or community testing site near you on this state map; you don't need a doctor's order. The map also shows retail sites, but there may be a charge.

DOs

Clean your hands before and after touching your mask

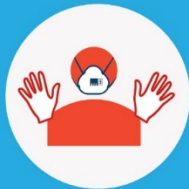Try to only touch your mask by the straps or loops

Inspect the mask for damage or dirt
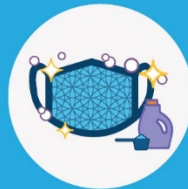
Adjust the mask to fit your face snugly

Cover your mouth, nose, and chin

Avoid touching the mask after you've put it on

Store the mask in a clean, breathable container

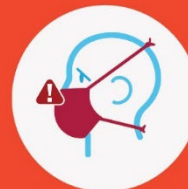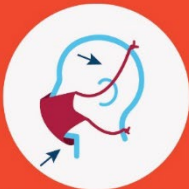Wash your mask with soap or detergent at least once a day

DON'Ts

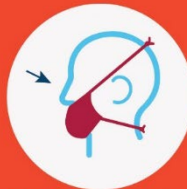Do not use a mask that is dirty, wet, or damaged
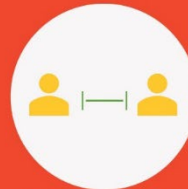
Do not share your mask with others

Do not use a mask that is difficult to breathe through

Do not wear your mask loosely

Do not wear your mask under your nose

Do not uncover your face or remove your mask if there are people within 6 feet
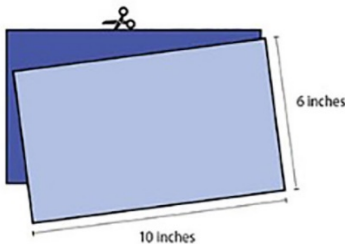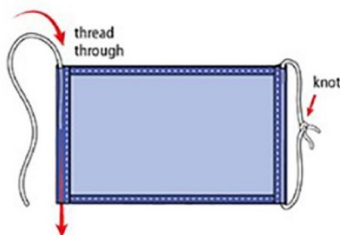
Sewn Cloth Face Covering

Materials

- Two 10"x6" rectangles of cotton fabric
- Two 6" pieces of elastic (or rubber bands, string, cloth strips, or hair ties)
- Needle and thread (or bobby pin)
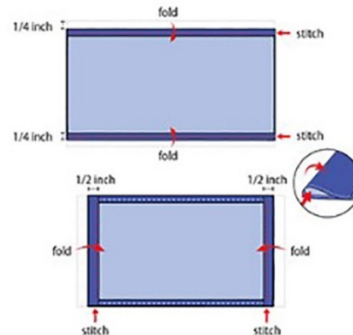- Scissors
- Sewing machine

Tutorial

1. Cut out two 10-by-6-inch rectangles of cotton fabric. Use tightly woven cotton, such as quilting fabric or cotton sheets. T-shirt fabric will work in a pinch. Stack the two rectangles; you will sew the mask as if it was a single piece of fabric.

6 inches

10 inches

2. Fold over the long sides ¼ inch and hem. Then fold the double layer of fabric over ½ inch along the short sides and stitch down.

fold
1/4 inch ← stitch
1/4 inch ← stitch
fold
1/2 inch   1/2 inch
fold   fold
stitch   stitch

3. Run a 6-inch length of 1/8-inch wide elastic through the wider hem on each side of the mask. These will be the ear loops. Use a large needle or a bobby pin to thread it through. Tie the ends tight.
Don't have elastic? Use hair ties or elastic head bands. If you only have string, you can make the ties longer and tie the mask behind your head.

thread through
knot

4. Gently pull on the elastic so that the knots are tucked inside the hem. Gather the sides of the mask on the elastic and adjust so the mask fits your face. Then securely stitch the elastic in place to keep it from slipping.

tuck in knot
stitch
stitch
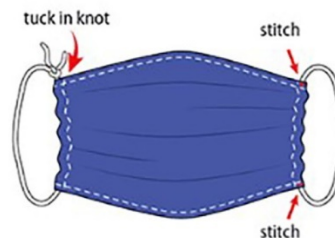
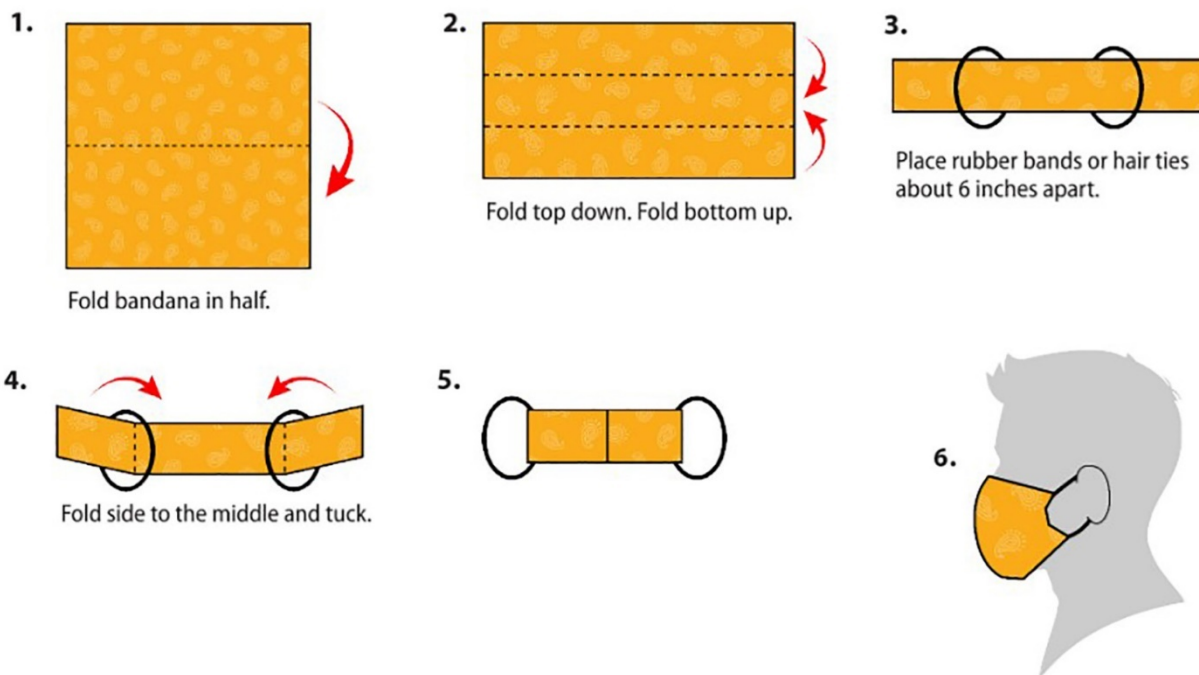| Who should wear	Who should not wear
· People older than 2 years of age in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain	· Children under age 2 · Anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance

Non-sewn Face Covering

Materials

- Bandana, old t-shirt, or square cotton cloth (cut approximately 20"x20")
- Rubber bands (or hair ties)
- Scissors (if you are cutting your own cloth)

Tutorial

1.

Fold bandana in half.

2.

Fold top down. Fold bottom up.

3.

Place rubber bands or hair ties about 6 inches apart.

4.

Fold side to the middle and tuck.

5.

6.

Make sure your cloth face covering:

- fits snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- completely covers the nose and mouth
- is secured with ties or ear loops
- includes multiple layers of fabric
- allows for breathing without restriction
- can be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

See more about how to wear and wash your cloth face covering.

SURGICAL MASKS

Surgical masks should be reserved for healthcare providers who must maintain close, prolonged contact with patients to provide care. This includes first responders, who give care until healthcare providers arrive.

- Occasionally, patients who are immunocompromised due to medications they take (chemotherapy) will be provided and asked to wear a surgical-grade mask.
- Surgical masks are not advised for people in "high risk" categories due to age and/or chronic medical conditions. They will be asked to appropriately social distance and wear face coverings if they need to go to public settings.
- Individuals who provide noncontact service, such as interviews or speaking with the public, do not need surgical-grade masks. This includes workers in offices and people's homes. Social distancing can and should be maintained in these situations. Cloth masks and other face coverings should be used.
- Prioritize surgical masks for selected activities, such as:
  o Essential surgeries and procedures
  o Care activities where splashes and sprays are anticipated
  o Activities where prolonged face-to-face or close contact with a potentially infectious patient is unavoidable
  o Performing aerosol-generating procedures if respirators are no longer available

N95 OR EQUIVALENT RESPIRATOR

Individuals only require an N95 or equivalent respirator if they are performing (or are in the same, closed space of someone performing) an aerosol-generating procedure (AGP). Aerosol-producing procedures include, but are not limited to, providing a nebulizer treatment (this does not include the use of a metered dose inhaler (MDI), placing a patient on noninvasive ventilation (BiPAP and CPAP), performing bag-valve mask ventilations, performing CPR, intubating or extubating a patient and performing dental and oral procedures with air, suction and/or drill equipment that have the potential of aerosolizing the virus. See the CDC's webpage about optimizing N95 respirator supplies for more information.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available at the links below.

- How to make, select, wear, wash and store masks; considerations for masks:
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html
- Masks: what you need to know, evidence of effectiveness, who should or shouldn't wear a mask, types, other types of face protection and adaptations/alternatives: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html
- CDC COVID-19 webpage: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/
- Indiana Department of Health COVID-19 webpage: https://coronavirus.in.gov
- Mask Up, Hoosiers: https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/maskuphoosiers/

Understanding the Difference

	Surgical Mask	N95 Respirator
Testing and Approval	Cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (**FDA**)	Evaluated, tested, and approved by **NIOSH** as per the requirements in **42 CFR Part 84**
Intended Use and Purpose	Fluid resistant and provides the wearer protection against large droplets, splashes, or sprays of bodily or other hazardous fluids. Protects the patient from the wearer's respiratory emissions.	Reduces wearer's exposure to particles including small particle aerosols and large droplets (**only non-oil aerosols**).
Face Seal Fit	Loose-fitting	Tight-fitting
Fit Testing Requirement	No	Yes
User Seal Check Requirement	No	Yes. Required each time the respirator is donned (put on)
Filtration	Does NOT provide the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles and is not considered respiratory protection	Filters out at least 95% of airborne particles including large and small particles
Leakage	Leakage occurs around the edge of the mask when user inhales	When properly fitted and donned, minimal leakage occurs around edges of the respirator when user inhales
Use Limitations	Disposable. Discard after each patient encounter.	Ideally should be discarded after each patient encounter and after aerosol-generating procedures. It should also be discarded when it becomes damaged or deformed; no longer forms an effective seal to the face; becomes wet or visibly dirty; breathing becomes difficult; or if it becomes contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids from patients.

CDC NIOSH
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health