



Protecting yourself and others from COVID-19

CDC recommendations on masks and more

Some people infected with COVID-19 remain asymptomatic for up to two weeks. Others never show symptoms at all. Yet many people with this virus can transmit it to others, which is why it's crucial to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations on how to protect yourself and others from transmitting or being exposed to the coronavirus.

New CDC guidelines on cloth face coverings

A new CDC recommendation states that all Americans should wear cloth face coverings in public, in addition to continuing other measures such as maintaining a six-foot social distance.

What's the best material to use?

These face coverings can be made of items found around the house, such as a bandana, vacuum cleaner bag or pillowcase. The denser the fabric, the better – as long as it's still breathable. Some fabrics do a better job than others when it comes to both protecting the wearer from spreading germs and from inhaling incoming microscopic particles. Recent tests scored different fabrics for this ability, but even the lowest scoring face covering is better than none.

Best filtration

- Allergy-reduction HVAC filter
- HEPA furnace filters
- Vacuum cleaner bags
- Layers of 600-count pillowcases
- Flannel

Medium filtration

- Stacked coffee filters

Lowest filtration

- Scarves and bandanas



One note about filter material – it may shed small fibers that shouldn't be inhaled, so it should be an inner layer of a mask, between two layers of cloth and with a cotton layer closest to the face. In general, the more layers of material, the more protection offered.

Make your own face covering:

[CDC: How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering](#)

[CDC: How to Make Your own Face Covering \(video\)](#)



A cloth face covering is not the same as a surgical mask. Medical grade masks or N-95 respirators are most needed and should be reserved for healthcare workers and first responders.

More CDC recommendations

Wearing a cloth face covering is just one of several recommendations from the CDC on how to protect yourself from COVID-19:



Clean your hands often for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water or with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.



Practice social distancing, and keep your distance, especially with those who are at higher risk of getting sick — older adults and people of any age with serious underlying medical conditions.



Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when in public — even if you do not feel sick.



Cover your coughs and sneezes by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or the inside of your elbow; immediately wash your hands afterward.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, with a common EPA-registered disinfectant, diluted household bleach or a solution of at least 70% alcohol.

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LCN-3030619-040620

PDF 4/20 **Z01**

Order code: GP-CVMSK-FLI001



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

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

<https://www.nytimes.com/article/coronavirus-homemade-mask-material-DIY-face-mask-ppe.html>

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