

TIPS TO WEAR MASKS COMFORTABLY TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Why is it important to wear a mask?

Your mask acts as a kind of filter, creating a barrier and making it difficult for the virus to spread.

When to wear a mask?

- Outside your home, especially in places highly frequented by people who do not reside in your home.
- When you are at home with people who do not reside in your home.
- At home, if you or someone in your household develop symptoms or have been in close contact with a COVID-19 patient.
- The masks are not recommended for infants under 2 years of age and people with breathing difficulties.
- If you have been fully vaccinated (for over two weeks after your final dose), CDC says you can stop wearing a mask around members of another household who are also fully vaccinated. However, there are many new variants and unknowns and it is always safer with masks.



What kind of mask should I choose?

- Reusable cloth masks are better for the environment, but disposable masks may have more standardized filtration.
- Ideally, cloth masks should consist of at least 3 layers; it is recommended that the inner layer is made of an absorbent material such as cotton, an intermediate layer consisting of a filter, and the outer layer is made of a non-absorbent material, such as polyester.
- Make sure the mask does not expose your nose.
- Convex masks can be more comfortable than the flat ones, since they allow more space to breathe and talk.
- If you are in high-risk areas or you are at increased risk, use a single KN95 mask, or two masks at the same time. CDC recommends pairing a surgical mask inside with a cloth mask outside, well fitting without restricting breathing.
- Alternatively you may use a face shield over the mask(s) for additional protection.
- If you wear glasses, a mask with a wire bridge in the nose (e.g. surgical masks) can reduce fogging of the lenses.



How To Pairing It Up



Always pair a surgical and a cloth mask for double masking

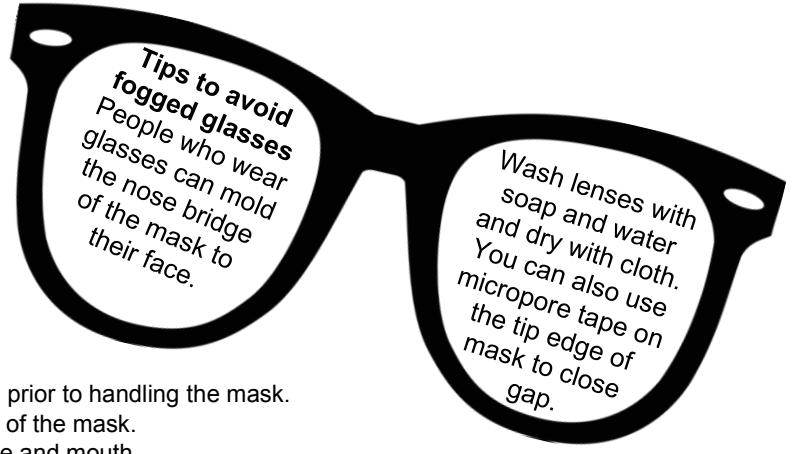
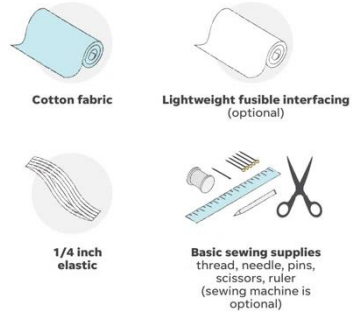


Do not use

- masks with valves, as they do not prevent the expulsion of droplets that can infect others.
- masks with transparent vinyl material, which can make breathing difficult.
- bandanas and scarves unless there are no alternatives.
- 2 disposable masks together.
- N95 masks or other devices that need to be prioritized for healthcare workers (unless you are one, or unless they are abundantly available); use KN95 instead.

Where to find good masks

Buy: Pharmacies, grocery stores, and some other stores carry masks. You can also find more varieties online.
Make: You can make your own mask from cloth, but avoid using materials like vinyl and plastic that can make breathing difficult.



How to wear a mask correctly

- Make sure your hands and the mask are clean prior to handling the mask.
- Touch only the borders, corners, elastic or ties of the mask.
- Make sure that the mask covers both your nose and mouth.
- Secure the mask using the elastic/ties.
- Once secured, press the nose bridge, if there is one, to tighten and fit.
- Make sure you have no difficulty breathing
- Do not put the mask around neck, forehead, head or let it dangle from one ear.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it.
- Change your mask if soiled or damp.

Important: Once you wear a mask, don't remove it unless you reach home or have a medical emergency. If you still need to touch it, make sure your hands are sanitized.
If you need to set it aside for a while, keep it in a clean bag or container.



How to adjust masks for a tighter fit:

Tying a knot:

- 1) Fold the surgical mask in half, lengthwise.
- 2) Make a knot with each ear loop as close as possible to the corners of the mask.
- 3) Unfold the mask and adapt the flexible nose bridge to your nose.
- 4) Fold in the corners, adjusting as needed.

Note: Criss crossing ear loops actually enlarges the gaps on the sides. Refer to steps 1-4 to tie a knot instead.



If your ear loops are loose, you can use a clip to tighten, folding the ear strings and inserting them through the loop of the clip. Adjust the clip inwards or outwards to ensure a better fit. You can find the clips online on websites like Amazon or Etsy or you can improvise using other materials like beads.



How to take off your mask

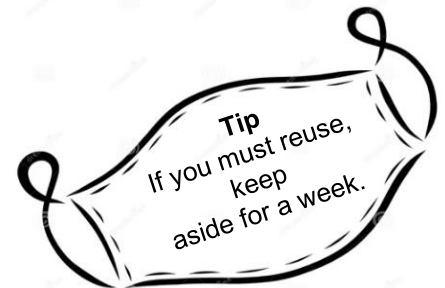
- Untie the strings or stretch the ear loops, handling the mask only by the loops or ties. If the mask is disposable, do not reuse it. Discard it appropriately.
- For reusable cloth masks, fold it inside out and put in the wash.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.

Where to store your mask

- Store your masks in a clean, dry place (e.g., in a box or in a separate drawer) or hang them on hooks.
- When outside, you can store them in a paper or Ziplock bag instead of putting it directly in the purse or pocket where it can rip, get damp or contaminated.

How to clean/wash and dry your mask

- Washing: You can wash your fabric masks with your regular laundry using hot water. If washing by hand, use bleach containing 5.25%-8.25% sodium hypochlorite (e.g. Clorox) and mix 5 tablespoons per gallon of room temperature water, or 4 tablespoons in a quart of room temperature water. Soak the mask in the solution for 5 minutes, discard the solutions and rinse the mask with cool or room temperature water.
- Drying: Preferably air dry in direct sunlight or use the highest heat setting in the dryer.
- **Importantly, do not wash disposable masks** (e.g. surgical, N95, or KN95 masks).



For more information, please visit:

- <https://www.fau.edu/newsdesk/articles/efficacy-facemasks-coronavirus.php>
- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>
- <https://www.today.com/health/how-make-mask-fit-better-how-wear-surgical-mask-t189236>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>

How to make masks

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yd19TbgVPAU&list=PLvvp9iOILTQZdKZTcAaYdyu4wKmhGCJNc&index=6&t=0s&ab_channel=CentersforDiseaseControlandPrevention%28CDC%29