Masks and face coverings

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Attachment 1

IF EACH OF US WEARS A MASK, EVERYONE IS PROTECTED.
You can make yours using a scarf or common fabric, like cotton.

covid19.ca.gov

https://covid19.ca.gov/masks-and-ppe/
Coronavirus spreads when an infected person speaks, sneezes, or coughs within 6 feet of others. You may have the virus and spread it even if you feel well.

**To prevent infection, you must cover your nose and mouth when outside your home.** So wearing a mask is now required statewide. Wearing a mask or cloth face covering can slow the spread of COVID-19 by limiting the release of virus into the air. It also reinforces physical distancing, and shows you care about the health of others.

**Don’t wear your mask under your nose or just on your chin.** A mask is only effective if it covers both ways you breathe.

Read the official [mask guidance from the California Department of Public Health](https://covid19.ca.gov/masks-and-ppe/). (Lee las [reglas de la máscara en español](https://covid19.ca.gov/masks-and-ppe/).)

Who needs a mask?
• Anyone going outside their home
• Workers in customer-facing industries
• Workers in offices, factories, or any group setting
• Doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals
• Other workers, as dictated by industry guidance

Who shouldn’t wear a mask?

• Children under 2 years old
• Anyone with trouble breathing
• Anyone unable to remove the mask without help
• Anyone with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that does not allow them to wear a mask

See a complete list of who should not wear a mask.

What kind of mask should you wear?

Most people should wear a cloth mask or face coverings.

• Wear masks with two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric.
• Do not wear masks intended for healthcare workers, like an N95 respirator.
• CDC does not recommend the use of gaiters or face shields. They’re still evaluating them and their effectiveness is unknown.
When should you wear a mask?

You should wear a mask or face covering whenever you’ll be around someone you don’t live with, including:

- In any indoor public space
- When waiting in line
- When getting health care
- On public transportation or when ride-sharing
- At work, when near others or moving through common areas
- Outdoors, if you can’t stay 6 feet away from others

When can you take off your mask?

There are times when it’s okay to take your mask off when you’re away from home, such as:

- When eating or drinking
- If a hearing-impaired person needs to read your lips
- If wearing a face covering imposes a risk to you at work – for example, if it could get caught in machinery
- When you’re not sharing a common area, room or enclosed space with others
- When you are getting a service to the nose or face
- When outdoors in public and can stay six feet from others

You should replace the mask as soon as you can after these
activities to reduce the risk of infection.

How to wear a mask?

Wear a mask correctly and **consistently** for the best protection.

- Choose a mask that covers your nose and mouth, goes under your chin, and fits snugly against the sides of your face
- Be sure to wash your hands before putting on a mask
- Do not touch the mask when wearing it

The CDC has more information about [how to wear masks](https://covid19.ca.gov/masks-and-ppe/).

Kinds of masks

There are many kinds of masks, but these are the 3 most common.

**Cloth mask or face covering**
This is cloth used to cover the nose and mouth, tied behind the head, or secured over the ears with elastic loops. It is made of cotton, silk, linen, or neoprene, and can be machine-made or hand-sewn. A homemade version can be improvised from a scarf or t-shirt. It should be made of tightly woven fabric.

Most people should wear a cloth mask. This is so there can be enough surgical masks and N95 respirator masks for medical personnel.

**Wearing a cloth face covering doesn't take the place of physical distancing.** It is effective when combined with keeping a 6-foot distance from others.

**Use and care:** Wear a clean mask every time you go out. Wash in the laundry or by hand between uses. See more mask care instructions from the California Department of Public Health.

**Where to find:** Many online sellers now offer masks in a variety of materials. You can also make your own. Read how in this cloth mask.
guidance from the CDC.

**Surgical mask**

This is a manufactured disposable mask, often used in surgery. Medical personnel wear them for protection against fluid splashes.

Some non-medical workers also wear surgical masks for disposability and fluid protection. They include those who work in:

- Manufacturing
- Food processing
- Community/social services
- Social work
- In-home day care
- Law enforcement/public safety
- Schools
Don’t buy surgical masks for personal use. They are part of PPE needed by medical professionals.

Use and care: Start with a new mask every day. Replace and dispose of it according to your workplace guidelines.

Where to find: If you are in one of the above industries, your employer must provide masks at work. If you’re a frontline employer and need to order them for your workers, see how to get PPE.

N95 respirator mask

This is a mask with a respirator that blocks 95% of particles that are otherwise inhaled. Medical personnel need them the most, but they’re used by some workers in other industries.

Don’t buy N95 respirator masks for personal use. They are part of PPE needed by medical professionals.
Use and care: Start with a new mask every day. Replace and dispose of it according to your workplace guidelines.

Where to find: If an N95 respirator mask is required for your job, your employer must provide them at work. If you’re a frontline employer who needs them for your workers, see how to get PPE.

See this chart of the various types of masks (PDF) for more details.

Questions and answers

Should I wear a mask or face covering to protect against COVID-19?  

What is a face covering?  

How well do face coverings prevent spread of COVID-19?  

How should I care for a cloth mask or face covering?
Are face shields acceptable as face coverings to prevent spread of COVID-19? +

Should I wear a mask on public transportation and at transportation hubs? +

Is there any proof that masks are effective in preventing coronavirus infection? +

Stay informed

- CDC: Use of Masks to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19
- CDC: Wear Face Masks on Public Transportation Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs
- CDC: How to Select, Wear, and Clean Your Mask
- CalOSHA: Face Coverings, Masks, and Respirators – When to Use Them to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19
- Wear a mask: Images you can share on social media
- CDC: Emerging evidence on effectiveness of masks