



# What You Should Know About Cloth Face Covers

In response to new information about how COVID-19 may be spread, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) now recommends that people wear cloth face coverings.

## Why should I wear a face covering?

A face covering can help protect others around you if you are infected and don't know it. New studies have shown that people who are infected with COVID-19 may be shedding the virus to others, but may not feel sick for several days. Others who have the virus may never feel sick.

One way the virus is spread is through droplets that are formed when you cough, sneeze, or talk. These droplets can travel in the air and get into the eyes, nose, or mouth of other people. A cloth face covering prevents your droplets from spreading to others. According to the CDC, it is a good idea to wear a face covering even if you don't feel sick, so you prevent your potentially infected respiratory droplets from spreading to others.

## What is a cloth face covering?

A face covering is any cloth, like a bandana or scarf, which covers your nose and mouth. It should contain multiple layers of fabric, but still allow you to breathe comfortably. The face covering should fit snugly along the sides of your face and also be large enough to fit underneath your chin.

While a cloth may help prevent spread of the virus between people in the community, it does not protect you from getting infected. You must continue to frequently wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, practice physical distancing of at least 6 feet, and avoid close contact with people who are sick.

The CDC recommends that the following individuals not wear a face covering:

- Children under the age of 2 years old
- Anyone with trouble breathing through the cloth
- Anyone unable to remove the cloth face covering if they develop difficulty breathing

## What is the difference between a cloth face covering and an N-95 respirator?

Cloth face coverings provide one-way protection, meaning they block respiratory droplets found in your breath, cough, or sneeze, from being released into the environment. A cloth face covering won't protect you from breathing in infected respiratory droplets floating in the air.

N-95 respirators are critical supplies for health care staff, front line workers, and those at risk for direct contact with patients infected with COVID-19. N-95 respirators have a tight-fitting face seal and provide two-way protection, meaning they protect you from

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inhaling virus droplets in the air, in addition to preventing your respiratory droplets from being released into the air.

### **Homemade face coverings**

A cloth face covering can be made out of any tightly woven cotton such as fabrics used for t-shirts, bandanas, or tea towels. Avoid materials that are not tightly woven, meaning you can see light passing through the material. Make sure you can breathe comfortably through the material when wearing the cloth face covering.

Make sure the cloth is washable so that it can be cleaned in a washing machine after each use. When you remove your used face covering, don't touch your eyes, nose, and mouth. Wash your hands immediately after removing it.

The CDC offers [guidance and tutorials](#) on creating sewn cloth face coverings, as well as no-sew masks using a t-shirt or a bandana.

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