



CENTER FOR DISEASE PREVENTION & CONTROL

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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Use of masks

- CDC recommends that people wear cloth masks in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other [social distancing](#) measures are difficult to maintain.
- Masks may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others.
- Masks are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings.
- Masks with exhalation valves or vents should NOT be worn to help prevent the person wearing the mask from spreading COVID-19 to others (source control). The purpose of masks is to keep respiratory droplets from reaching others to aid with source control. However, masks with one-way valves or vents allow air to be exhaled through a hole in the material, which can result in expelled respiratory droplets that can reach others.
- Masks should NOT be worn by children under the age of 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Recent research shows that "neck gaiters" are not effective protection against COVID-19. A neck gaiter is a loose ring of cloth that loops around the neck and is then drawn up over the nose and mouth.
- CDC recommends that Surgical masks and respirators (such as N95s) are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders.
- Some people, such as people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health conditions or other sensory sensitivities, may have challenges wearing a mask. They should consult with their healthcare provider for advice about wearing masks.
- Younger children (e.g., preschool or early elementary aged) may be unable to wear a mask properly, particularly for an extended period of time. Wearing of masks may be prioritized at times when it is difficult to maintain a distance of 6 feet from others (e.g., during carpool drop off or pick up, or when standing in line at school).
- Ensuring proper mask size and fit and providing children with frequent reminders and education on the importance and proper wear of masks may help address these issues.
- People should not wear masks while engaged in activities that may cause the mask to become wet, like when [swimming at the beach or pool](#).
- People who are engaged in high intensity activities, like running, may not be able to wear a mask if it causes difficulty breathing. If unable to wear a mask, consider conducting the activity in a location with greater ventilation and air exchange (for instance, outdoors versus indoors) and where it is possible to maintain physical distance from others.

Epidemiology – 845-364-2956
Immunization – 845-364-2520
Patient Services – 845-364-2534

Pharmacy – 845-364-2836
Sexual Health – 845-364-3771
Tuberculosis Services/Chest/Skin Test – 845-364-2995

- A face shield (clear plastic shield that hangs down over the face from the top of the head) is primarily used for eye protection for the person wearing it. At this time, it is not known what level of protection a face shield provides to people nearby from the spray of respiratory droplets from the wearer. There is currently not enough evidence to support the effectiveness of face shields for source control. Therefore, CDC **does not currently recommend** use of face shields as a substitute for masks.