

As we continue to learn about SARS-CoV-2 and emerging variants, wearing masks and face coverings while indoors is an additional layer of protection against the virus, even for individuals who are fully vaccinated. This is due to the fact that variants of SARS-CoV-2, such as the Delta and Omicron variant, can be spread easily by both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

EFFECTIVENESS OF MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS

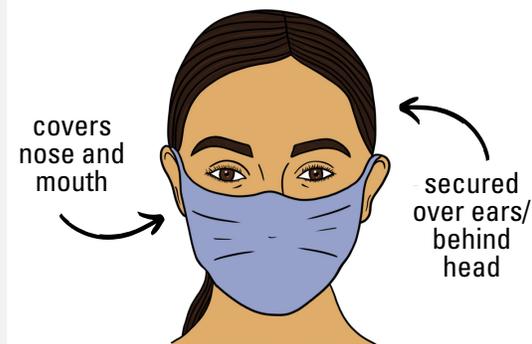
According to the CDC, masks and face coverings can be an effective way of preventing spread of infectious diseases.

Masks and face coverings are used over the mouth and nose of a person who is or might be infected to catch virus particles from a cough, sneeze or normal talking. Face coverings provide the best protection to the wearer if they are 1) the right type for the situation, 2) worn properly and 3) handled properly. Wearing a face covering can decrease risk but does not provide complete protection. Other risk reduction measures should also be followed, like physical distancing, handwashing and hand sanitizer usage, and avoiding touching eyes, mouth and nose.

WEARING FACE COVERINGS IN FOOD SETTINGS

- Many essential workers at grocery stores, restaurants, farms and food manufacturing are being asked to wear masks during work.
- Face coverings and gloves are intended to decrease the risk of transferring the virus particles from hands or through respiratory droplets from the mouth or nose.
- Gloves and face coverings do not eliminate risk, they only reduce it; they should be used in conjunction with handwashing and hand sanitizer use and physical distancing whenever possible.
- Since face coverings may become contaminated they should be changed as needed and laundered between uses or properly disposed of if using single use masks.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS



CARING FOR A FACE COVERING

- Face coverings can trap moisture with use, so it is best to have several on hand to use throughout the day.
- **Masks and face coverings should be handled assuming they are contaminated with the virus causing COVID-19.**
 - Face coverings should be removed without touching the inside. They should be immediately placed with dirty laundry, or properly disposed of if using single use masks.
- Wash your hands after handling a used face covering or use hand sanitizer if hand washing is not an option.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed at the hottest setting for the fabric, and dried thoroughly before next use.
 - Follow CDC guidance at [go.ncsu.edu/cdclaundry](https://www.cdc.gov/cdclaundry).
- Washing is more effective than heat alone, so face coverings should not be heated in microwave or conventional ovens.

HOW SHOULD MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS BE WORN?

- Proper fit is tight over the nose, mouth and chin.
 - Shaving is not necessary.
- Masks and face coverings can help reduce disease transmission but wearing one does not provide absolute protection.
- Face shields are not appropriate substitutes for face coverings but can be used as an extra measure.
- Clear lip-reading masks are an acceptable form of face coverings when lip-reading is necessary for communication.

