

COVID-19 PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

FACE COVERINGS AND MASKS

N95 and KN95 respirators (specialized filtering masks) are being recommended for use by the public, as they offer better levels of protection than other masks, such as cloth face coverings. Loosely woven cloth face coverings offer the least protection, disposable surgical masks and KN95s offer more protection, and N95 offer the highest level of protection. These masks help to catch particles expelled by a cough or sneeze and reduce spread of virus by people who may be infected but not showing symptoms.

WHAT IS A MASK OR FACE COVERING DESIGNED TO DO?

- Face coverings are one form of personal protective equipment (PPE) used in controlling disease transmission.
- Proper use may prevent the spread of virus from an infected person, or prevent a healthy person from becoming infected.
- In some cultures, simple cloth face covers are worn by those who suspect they are getting sick to prevent spreading the infection to others. These face covers may help catch particles expelled by a cough or sneeze.

HOW DO MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS WORK?

- Not all masks and face coverings are equally effective. Masks and cloth face coverings are made of different materials depending on intended use. For example, a respirator has better filtration offering the best protection
- Facemasks are tested for their ability to trap viruses in respiratory droplets moving at high velocity, such as in a cough or sneeze.

HOW SHOULD FACE COVERINGS BE HANDLED?

- **Masks and face coverings should be handled assuming they are contaminated with the virus causing COVID-19.**
- **Masks and face coverings should be removed without touching the inside. They should be immediately placed with dirty laundry, or for single use masks they should be disposed of properly.**
- Wash your hands after handling a used mask or use hand sanitizer if hand washing is not an option.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed after each use. Follow CDC guidelines at go.ncsu.edu/cdclaundry.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS



HOW SHOULD FACE COVERINGS BE WORN?

- Masks and face coverings can be uncomfortable to wear. A 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.
- According to CDC, consider using KN95/N95 masks whenever interacting with the public or when caring for someone who is sick or may be infected.
- It is not necessary to wear a face covering while at home or outside for exercise.

Masks can be an effective means of slowing the spread of the infectious agent for many respiratory illnesses and COVID-19. Wearing a face covering does NOT provide complete protection and does not replace other ways of slowing virus spread such as:

- Getting a COVID-19 vaccine and booster
- Practicing physical distancing
- Washing hands and using hand sanitizer often

