



## Face Mask Coverings – Guidance and FAQ

### Guidance on Cloth Face Coverings from the Washington State Department of Health

Washington state is currently experiencing significant community-based transmission of COVID-19. Recent information suggests that a significant portion of persons with COVID-19 may not have any symptoms, and even those who do have symptoms can transmit the infection before showing signs of illness.

The Washington State Department of Health and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) now recommend that people wear cloth face coverings when they are in public settings where they cannot maintain 6 feet of distance from others. This might include trips to the grocery store, pharmacy, hardware store, health clinic or similar places.

*This recommendation is not a substitute for existing guidance to maintain 6-feet of physical distance from non-household members and performing frequent hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Wearing cloth face coverings will not prevent spread of COVID-19 without these other protective measures.*

This is not a mandate that you must wear a face covering. It is considered an additional layer of protection.

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### Frequently Asked Questions: Cloth Face Coverings

**What kind of mask should I use?** We are not talking about hospital masks. We are talking about cloth face coverings made out of fabric you already have at home. It is important that we reserve surgical masks and N95 masks for health care providers who come into close contact with sick people all day. The rest of us do not need this level of protection. Cloth face coverings should cover your mouth and nose with multiple layers of fabric, allow for easy breathing, fit snugly against the side of your face, and be secured with ties or ear loops. And once you have it on, just leave it there! Try not to touch it or adjust it. When you remove it, be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, and wash your hands well right after you take it off.

**I cannot sew and I am not at all crafty. What can I do?** You do not need to know how to sew! In this [45 second video](#), the Surgeon General shows us how to make a cloth face covering out of a scarf, bandana, or t-shirt plus some rubber bands. No sewing, creativity, or bedazzling necessary!

**Now that I have my face covered, am I 100% safe?** You and the community are safest with us all at home. It's important that we remember face coverings are just one additional layer of

protection. A cloth face cover doesn't protect us anywhere near as well as great hand washing and staying away from other people.

**I am an essential worker. How often do I wear a face covering?** If you have a job that makes it unavoidable for you to be six feet away from others, you can wear a cloth face covering all day. Just be sure to wash it at the end of the day.

**How do I wash my cloth face covering?** Wash your cloth face covering after each use, or at least daily. You can wash them in the washing machine, with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot cycle.