



Cloth Face Mask

Wearing a cloth face mask is recommended in situations where it is difficult to practice social distancing. For example, in shops and on public transport. They may help prevent people who do not know they have the virus from spreading it to others.

If you wear one, you should still do the important things necessary to prevent the spread of the virus including:

- Social distancing
- mask your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
- washing your hands properly and often
- not touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

Why wear Cloth Face Masks

- A cloth face mask is a material you wear that covers the nose and mouth.
- Wearing a cloth face mask in public may reduce the spread of coronavirus in the community. It may help to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets from people infected with coronavirus.
- Cloth face masks may help to stop people who are not aware they have the virus from spreading.

When to wear one

You may choose to wear a cloth face mask:

- when staying 2 metres apart from people is difficult - for example, in shops, shopping centres or public transport
- in an enclosed indoor space with other people

Who should not wear one

Cloth face masks are not suitable for children under the age of 13 and anyone who:

- has trouble breathing
- is unconscious or incapacitated
- is unable to remove it without help
- has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face mask

Do not criticise or judge people who are not able to wear a face mask.

How to wear one

A cloth face mask should cover the nose and go under the chin and:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include at least 2 layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction

How to wash one (Wash hands before and after use).

- Wash daily in a hot wash over 60 degrees with detergent.
- If using a washing machine, you should be able to wash and machine dry it without damage or change to shape.
- You do not need to sterilise cloth face masks. Wash it in a washing machine or by hand as you would any other item of clothing.

To take a face mask off properly

- remove it from behind - do not touch the front of the mask
- put in a sealable clean waterproof bag or wash immediately - put disposable masks in a bin straight away
- clean your hands properly



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How to use a cloth face mask properly

Do

- ❖ Clean your hands properly before you put it on.
- ❖ Practice using it so you are comfortable putting it on and taking it off.
- ❖ Make sure it is made from a fabric you are comfortable wearing.
- ❖ Cover your mouth and nose with it and make sure there are no gaps between your cloth face mask.
- ❖ Tie it securely.
- ❖ Carry unused face masks in a sealable clean waterproof bag, for example, a ziplock.
- ❖ Carry a second similar type bag to put used face masks in.

Don't

- ❖ Do not touch a face mask while wearing it - if you do, clean your hands properly.
- ❖ Do not use a wet or soiled face mask.
- ❖ Do not share face masks.
- ❖ Do not lower your face masks to speak, eat and smoke or vape - if you need to uncover your nose or mouth take the face mask off and put it in the bag for used face masks.
- ❖ Do not discard face masks in public places.

(This information has been extrapolated from the HSE Guidelines on Cloth Face Coverings issued May 16, 2020)