Do I Need a Mask? Yes. You spread germs and viruses when you:
- Breathe
- Talk
- Sneeze or cough
- Shout or sing

A mask creates a barrier that prevents germs and viruses from spreading.

There's a lot we don't know about COVID-19, but studies show masks reduce the risk of spreading infection.

How Do I Wear a Mask? Your mask should:
- Fit snugly
- Cover your mouth and nose
- Allow you to breathe comfortably

Do not pull your mask up, down, or off while you’re out. Leave it in place.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer:
- Before you put on your mask
- If you touch or adjust your mask
- After you take off your mask

What Kind of Mask Should I Wear?

**Cloth Mask**

Most people need a simple cloth mask. You can buy one or make your own.

**Cloth masks:**
- Are reusable and should be washed after each use
- Can prevent the spread of respiratory droplets
- Should have two layers of dense fabric
- Need secure straps

**Wear a cloth mask:**
- Anytime you leave your home
- Whenever you’re within 6 feet of someone who doesn’t live in your house

**Surgical/Medical Mask**

Wear a surgical mask if you're at high risk of exposure to disease or caring for someone who’s sick.

**Surgical masks:**
- Are one-time use/disposable
- Can prevent you from spreading respiratory droplets
- May stop large droplets, splashes & sprays from reaching your mouth and nose
- Have layers that adjust to fit your face
- Should be worn with the colored side facing out
What Masks Should I Avoid?

**N95 and KN95 Masks**

Leave these masks for healthcare workers. Consider donating any N95 or KN95 masks you have.

*N95 and KN95 masks:*

- Restrict airflow if worn properly
- Need professional fitting for best use

**Cloth Masks With Filters**

Avoid homemade cloth masks with filters.

*Homemade cloth masks with filters:*

- Can make it hard to breathe
- May contain harmful fibers

How Do I Take Off My Mask?

- **Pull the ear loops or untie the strings.**
- **Don’t touch other parts of the mask or your face.**
- **Wash your mask if it’s reusable.**
- **Clean your hands with soap and water.**

How Do I Care for My Mask?

*Wash your cloth mask after each use:*

- Use a mild detergent
- Dry in a hot dryer or air dry on a clean surface inside or outside in the sun
- Store in a clean bag or container

Don’t share your mask unless you wash and dry it first.

Want to make a mask?

The CDC has instructions. You can even make one without sewing.


Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), NY Times, The Lancet, Washington Post, World Health Organization