

# The Importance of Wearing A Mask

Wear a mask to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community from COVID-19. COVID-19, or Coronavirus, is spread through tiny droplets from the nose and mouth of one person traveling to another person. When a person coughs, sneezes, or even talks, these droplets can travel up to six feet, and possibly further, increasing the chance of infecting others. And Covid-19 can be spread by people who don't have any symptoms or know they are infected.

But a mask works as a barrier, stopping these droplets from traveling. That's why it is so important to wear a mask. Wearing a mask is one of the best ways you can protect yourself and others from the spread of coronavirus.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends all people 2 years old and older wear masks in public and when you around people who do not live in your home, especially when social distancing is hard to do.

You should also wear a mask if you are sick with COVID-19 or think you may be sick and when caring for a sick loved one in your home. A mask only works as a barrier of protection if you wear it correctly. Before putting on your mask, wash your hands.

Choose a mask with two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric. Make sure your mask completely covers your nose and mouth and fits snugly against the side of your face without gaps. Make sure your mask is secure under your chin.

If you wear eyeglasses, find a mask that fits closely over your nose or one that has a nose wire to limit fogging. For children 2 years and older, try to find a mask that is made specifically for children. If you cannot find a mask made for children, make sure it fits snugly over their nose and mouth and under the chin.

Do not choose a mask made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, for example vinyl. Do not use masks with one-way valves or vents, which allows virus particles to escape. And do not wear masks intended for healthcare workers and first responders including N95 masks or surgical masks. These masks are critical for healthcare workers and others to do their jobs.

Masks should not be worn by anyone who has trouble breathing or anyone who cannot take off their mask without help from another person. In cases where masks cannot be worn, make sure to practice other safety measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 including social distancing, washing your hands often, and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.

When worn correctly and consistently masks are the best protection against COVID-19 for you, your loved ones, and your community. For more information on masks, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).