

Coronavirus Disease 2019

Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission



Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

CDC continues to study the spread and effects of the novel coronavirus across the United States. We now know from [recent studies](#) that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this new evidence, CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission.

It is critical to emphasize that maintaining 6-foot social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus. CDC is additionally advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

This recommendation complements and does not replace the [President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America, 30 Days to Slow the Spread](#) [↗](#), which remains the cornerstone of our national effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus. CDC will make additional recommendations as the evidence regarding appropriate public health measures continues to develop.

[How to Make Your own Face Covering](#)

Recent Studies:

- Rothe C, Schunk M, Sothmann P, et al. Transmission of 2019-nCoV Infection from an Asymptomatic Contact in Germany. *The New England journal of medicine*. 2020;382(10):970-971.
- Zou L, Ruan F, Huang M, et al. SARS-CoV-2 Viral Load in Upper Respiratory Specimens of Infected Patients. *The New England journal of medicine*. 2020;382(12):1177-1179.
- Pan X, Chen D, Xia Y, et al. Asymptomatic cases in a family cluster with SARS-CoV-2 infection. *The Lancet Infectious diseases*. 2020.
- Bai Y, Yao L, Wei T, et al. Presumed Asymptomatic Carrier Transmission of COVID-19. *Jama*. 2020.
- Kimball A HK, Arons M, et al. Asymptomatic and Presymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 Infections in Residents of a Long-Term Care Skilled Nursing Facility — King County, Washington, March 2020. *MMWR Morbidity and mortality weekly report*. 2020; ePub: 27 March 2020.
- Wei WE LZ, Chiew CJ, Yong SE, Toh MP, Lee VJ. Presymptomatic Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 — Singapore, January 23–March 16, 2020. *MMWR Morbidity and mortality weekly report*. 2020; ePub: 1 April 2020.
- Li R, Pei S, Chen B, et al. Substantial undocumented infection facilitates the rapid dissemination of novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV2). *Science (New York, NY)*. 2020.