



WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

ARE FACE COVERINGS RECOMMENDED FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC?

Recent studies have shown that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms and that even those who eventually develop symptoms 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, such as 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.

WHAT TYPES OF FACE COVERINGS ARE RECOMMENDED?

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.

HOW SHOULD CLOTH FACE COVERINGS BE WORN?

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children younger than age 2 or on anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Cloth face coverings should:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape



HOW DO I MAKE A CLOTH FACE COVERING?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has posted detailed [directions and patterns](#) for making cloth face coverings with or without sewing. U.S. Surgeon General has also posted a [video](#) showing how to make your own face covering.

CARING FOR CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

Cloth face coverings should be routinely cleaned in a washing machine depending on the frequency of use.

HOW TO SAFELY REMOVE A USED CLOTH FACE COVERING

Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose and mouth when removing their face covering and wash hands immediately after removing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

General questions from the public or healthcare provider inquiries about COVID-19 may be directed to the ISDH COVID-19 Call Center at the toll-free number 877-826-0011 (available 24/7).

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available at the links below.

- CDC COVID-19 webpage: <http://coronavirus.gov>
ISDH COVID-19 webpage: <https://coronavirus.in.gov>
- Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>