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Guidance on the Use of Cloth Face Coverings

Current as of April 6, 2020

What are cloth face coverings?

Cloth face coverings can be homemade or manufactured. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not regulate cloth face coverings, and they are not considered Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as surgical/medical masks or N95 respirators.

Why should you wear cloth face coverings?

Recent studies suggest that the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads through droplets that are generated during coughing, sneezing and talking. These droplets can travel up to six feet and survive on surfaces for a long time. Because of this, social distancing is extremely crucial in slowing the spread of the virus by reducing exposure to the droplets.

Studies also indicate that some individuals with COVID-19 lack symptoms, but they can still be contagious up to 48 hours before the onset of symptoms. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) and Southeastern Idaho Public Health now recommends the use of cloth face coverings in public settings, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, etc., where there is high probability of encountering close contact with others, particularly in counties experiencing community-based transmission. This new recommendation is in addition to practicing social distancing by maintaining at least six feet of distance from others and regular hand washing.

Who should wear cloth face coverings?

Cloth face coverings serve two purposes: to protect the public from those that may be infected with COVID-19 and to protect those infected with COVID-19 from spreading the disease to others. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under the age of two, anyone with difficulty breathing, anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or unable to remove the covering without assistance.

Which materials can be used to construct cloth face coverings?

- Bandanas (or square cotton cloth approximately 20" x 20")
- Coffee filters
- Rubber bands (or hair ties)
- Scissors (for cutting cloth)

How should a cloth face cover fit?

The face covering should:

- Fit tightly, enclosing the area around the nose and mouth from the bridge of the nose down to the chin, and it should extend beyond the corners of the mouth so that no gaps occur when talking or moving.
- Fit firmly, secured by strings attached to the covering and loop around both ears.
- Include multiple layers of fabric that can block droplets from entering the nose or mouth.
- Allow breathing without any restrictions.
- Be easy to wash and machine dry without causing any changes to the material.

Washing cloth face coverings

After each use, face coverings require washing in hot water with regular detergent and should be dried completely on a hot dryer setting.

Resource for making cloth face coverings

Videos:

- How to Make Your own Face Covering CDC - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPx1yqvJgf4&feature=emb_title
- Face Mask Kit – <https://vimeo.com/399324367/13cd93f150>
- DIY: How to sew Face Mask | NO Sewing

Machine! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xN0HH2Zb2hY>

Written Instructions:

- How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering CDC – <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- How To Make A Face Mask – <https://www.allinahealth.org/-/media/allina-health/files/mask-sewing-how-to.pdf>
- Face Mask Directions – <https://www.leadingagewa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/296/2020/02/Instructions.pdf>
- Taiwanese Doctor Teaches How To DIY Cloth Face Mask With Air Filter, So No Need To Scramble At Stores - <https://mustsharenews.com/cloth-face-mask/>

- Can DIY Masks Protect Us from Coronavirus? – <https://smartairfilters.com/en/blog/diy-homemade-mask-protect-virus-coronavirus/>

- What Are the Best Materials for Making DIY Masks? – <https://smartairfilters.com/en/blog/best-materials-make-diy-face-mask-virus/>
DIY Cloth Face Mask – <https://www.instructables.com/id/DIY-Cloth-Face-Mask/>

References –

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https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2006372?query=featured_coronavirus

2. Simple Respiratory Protection—Evaluation of the Filtration Performance of Cloth Masks and Common Fabric Materials Against 20–1000 nm Size Particles:

<https://academic.oup.com/annweh/article/54/7/789/202744>

3. Transmission of 2019-nCoV Infection from an Asymptomatic Contact in Germany –

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2001468>

4. SARS-CoV-2 Viral Load in Upper Respiratory Specimens of Infected Patients –

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2001737>

5. Asymptomatic cases in a family cluster with SARS-CoV-2 infection –

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6. Presumed Asymptomatic Carrier Transmission of COVID-19 –

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2762028>

7. Asymptomatic and Pre-symptomatic SARS-CoV-2 Infections in Residents of a Long-Term Care Skilled Nursing Facility — King County, Washington, March 2020 –

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6913e1.htm>

8. 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>

9. Substantial undocumented infection facilitates the rapid dissemination of novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV2) –

<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/03/24/science.abb3221/>

10. Study suggests new coronavirus may remain on surfaces for days –

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/study-suggests-new-coronavirus-may-remain-surfaces-days>