

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

If you need to leave your home, wear a cloth face covering.

The Health Department recommends that all Vermonters wear cloth face coverings when outside of the home to help slow the spread of COVID-19. This advice is based on new data about how COVID-19 can spread before a person has any symptoms. A mask helps you protect others around you if you are infected and don't know it.

A face covering is one more precaution we can take to help slow the spread of COVID-19 – and is **not a substitute for physical distancing and other prevention measures**. You still need to stay at least 6 feet away from people, even when wearing a face covering.

The cloth face coverings recommended are **not** surgical masks or N-95 respirators. These types of masks are critical supplies that must be reserved for our health care workers and first responders. Please make your own face coverings with household items (see more on the back).



Examples of when to wear a face covering	Examples of when you don't need to wear a face covering
Trips to the grocery store, pharmacy, doctor or hospital	Going for a walk in the woods or in your neighborhood. But bring one in case you encounter other people and stop to chat
Essential workers at a grocery store, pharmacy, or other business setting where there they cannot maintain at least 6 feet distance between themselves and others	At home, if everyone in the home isn't showing symptoms
At home if you are sick and have other people in the house	Going for a run on the bike path, if it's not too crowded
Home care workers caring for vulnerable populations	Who should never wear a mask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under the age of 2 • anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious • anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance
Riding the bus, taxi, or ride share	
Walking on a busy and crowded street	

What is a face covering?

A face covering is any well-secured cloth (like a bandana or scarf) that covers your mouth and nose.

Why are you recommending this now?

There is a lot we are still learning about COVID-19. However, there is increased evidence that people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus, and that droplets produced when breathing, speaking, or clearing your throat may spread COVID-19 from person-to-person. We continue to think staying home and practicing physical distancing and good hand hygiene are the most important ways to stop the spread of COVID-19. By recommending that Vermonters use a face covering, we are adding one more action to help reduce the spread.

How to wear a cloth face covering:

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.



Routinely clean it daily by hand or machine using detergent.

A washing machine should suffice to properly wash a cloth face covering. Make sure it's completely dry before using. You should have a few on hand so you can rotate for washing.

Remove and store it properly and safely.

- Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth when removing it.
- Immediately wash your hands after removing it.
- Don't put it where others can touch it or on counter tops or tables.

Make your own.

CDC has [instructions on making your own coverings](#) in several different methods, including machine or hand-sewn, a no-sew method with a t-shirt and scissors, and a no-sew method with a bandana.

