

FACE MASKS AND THE CORONAVIRUS

This factsheet provides basic information and guidance about the use of face masks for both workers and the general public. Employers must provide additional training and protect workers who may be exposed to the virus on the job.



WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS?

How does the coronavirus spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 can spread from one person to another in several ways.

- The virus travels on tiny liquid droplets created when someone with the virus sneezes, coughs, talks and even breathes. Some larger droplets can land on nearby people and surfaces. Others, some too small to see, can remain in the air longer and travel farther away.
- The virus can get into another person's body if they breathe it in through their mouth or nose, if droplets land in their eyes, or if they touch a surface contaminated with the virus then touch their mouth, nose or eyes.
- Once the virus is in someone's body, it can cause illness and even death.

COVID-19 symptoms can include:

Dry Cough



Fever



Head & Body Aches



Fatigue



Loss of Taste & Smell



Difficulty Breathing



ALERT: You might not know right away that you've been infected.
You can spread the virus to other people before you have any symptoms!

How will I know if someone has the virus?

- Anyone could be infected and not know it. You should assume everyone, including yourself, may be infected and could spread the virus to other people.
- Everyone must take steps to protect themselves and others.

How can I protect myself and others?

- Maintain a **physical distance** of **at least 6 feet** (2 meters) between yourself and others.
- **Clean surfaces frequently** to remove dirt, **then use a disinfectant** to remove any virus particles.
- **Wash your hands** frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer.
- **Do not touch your face** without immediately washing your hands before and afterward.
- **Cover your mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue into a hands-free trash can and wash your hands immediately. If you do not have a tissue, cough into your elbow instead of your hand.
- **Stay home** as much as possible. **Isolate if you have any symptoms or have been exposed.**

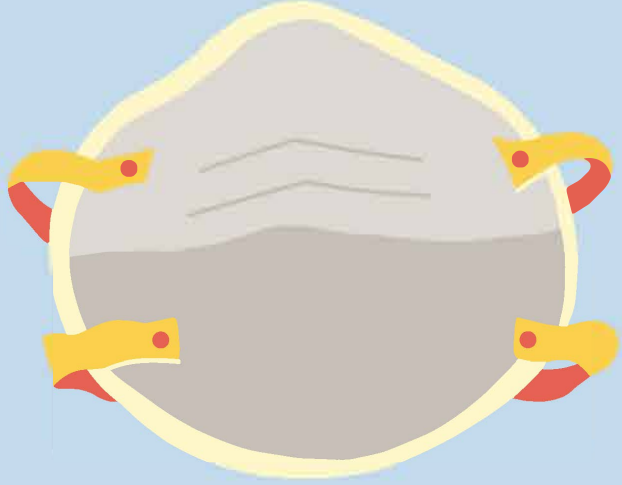
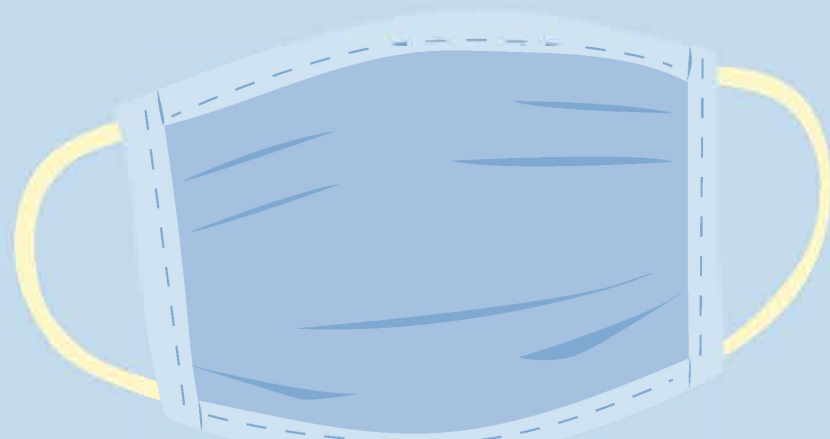
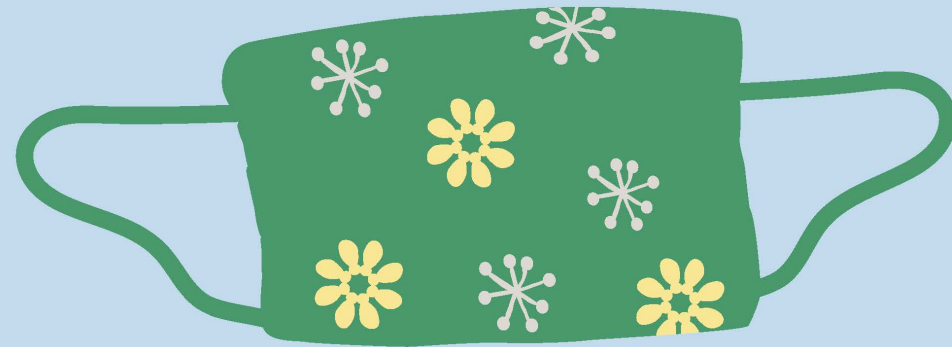


WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT FACE MASKS

Concern about exposure in the community has led cities, counties, states and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to call for the public to wear masks in public places. Concern about exposure at work has also prompted some workers who have not received protection from their employers to use their own masks.

Because of the shortage of respirators and surgical masks, which are desperately needed by health care workers and emergency responders, people worldwide are making or buying their own face masks as protection. Here's what you need to know.

What's the difference between a respirator, a surgical mask, and a cloth or other face mask?

Respirators	Surgical or Medical Masks	Homemade or Cloth Masks
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Made of special fibers that can trap small particles. (Other styles of respirator may provide even more protection.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Typically made of material that resists liquids or fluids soaking through. Helps trap droplets when wearer breathes, talks, coughs or sneezes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Typically made of multiple layers of fabric that can help trap droplets when wearer breathes, talks, coughs or sneezes. See guidelines from CDC: bit.ly/36D4DrT.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can form a tight seal on face.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loose fitting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loose fitting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protects wearer from most small virus particles if worn correctly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small virus particles can go through the material or around the edge of the mask. Protects wearer from liquid sprays and splashes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small virus particles can go through the fabric or around the edge of the mask. Fabric does not protect from sprays and splashes.

All respirators and masks must:

Cover the Nose and Mouth



From the top of the nose to under the chin.
Always wear the same side facing out.

Be Replaced When Wet or Damaged



A wet or damaged mask will not protect you.

Be Provided By the Employer



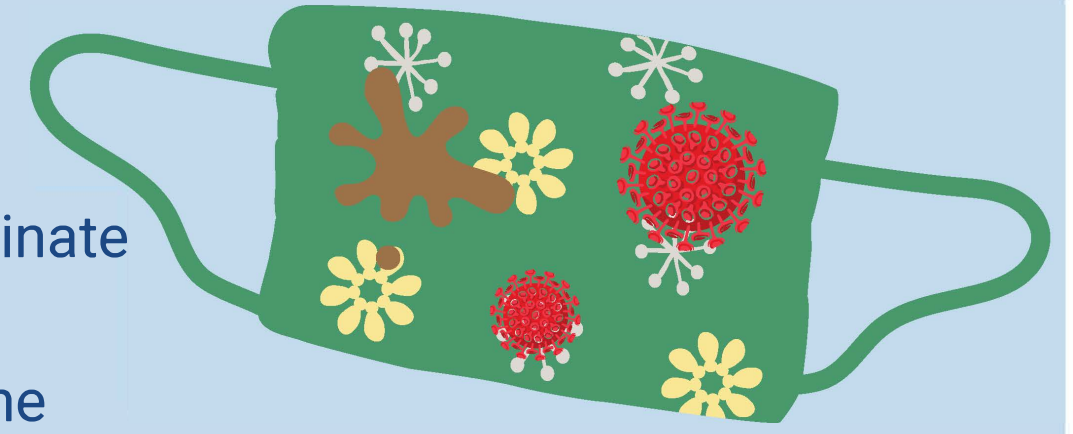
Employers must provide appropriate respiratory protection for workers who may be exposed to the coronavirus on the job.



ALERT: Face or cloth masks do not eliminate the risk of exposure and must be used with other precautions. Use them correctly to limit the spread of disease.

How could wearing a mask increase my risk of exposure to the virus?

- Wearing a mask can give you a false sense of security. You may think you are protected so you ignore other precautions like keeping a safe distance from others. If people nearby are infected, you could expose yourself to more of the virus.
- A contaminated mask can increase your risk of infection.
 - Masks can be uncomfortable – touching your mask to adjust it can contaminate your mask or your hands.
 - Your mask can become damp when you breathe so any virus that gets on the mask can stay infectious for a longer time.
 - Storing your mask in a contaminated area can contaminate it.
 - Removing your mask incorrectly can contaminate your mask or your hands.



WHAT CAN I DO TO BE AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE WHILE USING A MASK?

Continue to maintain your distance from others, wash your hands and clean surfaces frequently. A mask alone does not provide sufficient protection.

Putting on your mask:

1. If you have long hair, pull it back and out of the way.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water before handling your mask. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
3. Be sure your mask is clean and dry.
4. Use the straps to put it on. Do not touch the inner or outer surface of the breathing area of the mask. Always wear the same side facing out.
5. Adjust it so it covers your nose and mouth and to minimize any gaps between the mask and your face.
6. If you must touch or adjust your mask while wearing it, clean your hands before and after with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
7. Replace the mask with a new one if it becomes damp from breathing, coughing, or sneezing, or from splashes and sprays.
8. Do not share your mask with others. Mark it so you know it's yours.



Removing your mask at the end of the day or end of your shift:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
2. Once used, your mask may be contaminated. Handle it carefully and do not touch the inner or outer surface of the mask area.
3. Use the straps to remove the mask without touching the mask or letting the mask touch your face.
4. Put the used mask in a paper or other breathable bag with your name and close it so you don't spread any contamination.
5. Wash the used mask the same day or as soon as possible with hot water and soap, dry thoroughly, and store in a clean bag. Avoid leaving a used mask in a closed bag where any virus on the mask could remain infectious.



If you must remove and re-use your mask before washing:

Ideally use a clean mask each time you put one on. If you remove your mask temporarily and don't have access to a clean one, use these precautions.

1. Wash your hands and remove your mask carefully as above.
2. Store it in a clean paper bag marked with your name. Do not put your mask down on a contaminated surface or wear it hanging from your neck or on your head.
3. Put the mask on again carefully with the straps as above without touching the inner or outer surface of the breathing area.
4. If it becomes damaged or wet, do not re-use it.



ALERT: Always use your mask together with other precautions – keeping a safe distance, washing your hands, disinfecting surfaces. And always put it on, remove it, clean it and store it safely.



REMINDER FOR WORKERS: Employers must protect you from job hazards. If you might be exposed to the coronavirus on your job, ***your employer is responsible for training and protecting you.*** Talk to your supervisor, coworkers, union representative or other worker advocate about how to exercise your right to a safe job.

The information on this factsheet will be updated as new research becomes available.

For more COVID-19 resources, visit our website at www.losh.ucla.edu or scan QR code:
For training inquiries, contact us at: loshinfo@ucla.edu | (310) 794-5964



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