

FACE COVERINGS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Michigan.gov/Coronavirus

Updated June 22, 2021

There is no longer a statewide requirement to wear a face mask in most settings; however, local health departments, establishments, sports organizers, and school districts may have additional rules that must be followed. Further, the CDC requires that all persons – regardless of vaccination status – wear masks on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation and hubs.

MDHHS has released strong recommendations that individuals wear face masks in situations as described in the [Rapid Public Health Alert: Face Mask Recommendations](#).









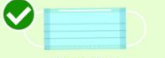



A face mask is a tightly woven cloth or other multi-layer absorbent material that closely covers an individual's mouth and nose. [For the best protection](#):

1. **Make sure your mask fits snugly against your face.** Gaps can let air with respiratory droplets leak in and out around the edges of the mask
2. **Pick a mask with layers to keep your respiratory droplets in and others' out.** A mask with layers will stop more respiratory droplets getting inside your mask or escaping from your mask if you are sick.

Please see the information below, to help you make the best choices when selecting a face mask.

Mask up, Mask right

A face mask is defined as a tightly woven cloth or other multi-layer absorbent material that closely covers an individual's mouth and nose. Here are some guidelines to help you choose the most effective face mask.

Recommended	Not Recommended
 <p>Masks that fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face)</p>	 <p>Masks that do not fit properly (large gaps, too loose or too tight)</p>
 <p>Masks with two or three layers</p>	 <p>Masks with one layer</p>
 <p>Masks made with tightly woven fabric (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source)</p>	 <p>Masks made from loosely woven fabric or that are knitted (i.e., fabrics that let light pass through)</p>
 <p>Masks with inner filter pockets</p>	 <p>Masks with exhalation valves or vents</p>
 <p>Non-medical disposable masks</p>	 <p>Masks made from materials that are hard to breathe through (such as plastic or leather)</p>
 <p>Masks made with breathable fabric (such as cotton)</p>	 <p>Wearing a scarf/ski mask as a mask</p>

Need help getting a mask?

Residents can pick up a free mask from partner sites across the state, including most local MDHHS offices and Community Action Agencies. Find a distribution site or call the COVID-19 hotline at 1-888-535-6136.



For more information, visit Michigan.gov/Coronavirus

How do I wear a cloth face covering?

Your cloth face covering must cover your mouth and nose and secure under your chin. A face covering that does not fit properly may not protect you and those around you.

Check that your mask **Fits Snugly** over your nose, mouth, and chin

- Check for gaps by cupping your hands around the outside edges of the mask.
- Make sure no air is flowing from the area near your eyes or from the sides of the mask.
- If the mask has a good fit, you will feel warm air come through the front of the mask and may be able to see the mask material move in and out with each breath.

[Additional considerations for wearing a face covering](#)

Wearing two masks is an easy way to increase your protection against COVID-19.

The protection offered by masks is limited by the way the mask fits. An ill-fitting mask does not offer the best protection against COVID-19. Double masking is an easy way to improve fit, which also improves protection. The more particles that are blocked, the better you are protected against getting COVID-19.

One party wearing double masks*	Exposure reduced by 83%
Both parties wearing double masks*	Exposure reduced by 96%
Both parties wearing medical masks knotted and tucked properly	Exposure reduced by 96%

Data Source: [Maximizing Fit for Cloth and Medical Procedure Masks to Improve Performance and Reduce SARS-CoV-2 Transmission and Exposure, 2021](#)

* Double masks refer to a three-ply medical procedure mask covered by a three-ply cloth cotton mask. A knotted and tucked medical procedure mask is created by bringing together the corners and ear loops on each side, knotting the ears loops together where they attach to the mask, and then tucking in and flattening the resulting extra mask material to minimize the side gaps.

[Other options to improve fit](#) include wearing a mask fitter or wearing a nylon covering (like a gaiter) over a mask.

Can I make my own face covering?

Yes! It is encouraged to be creative with your face covering. Check out [sew and no-sew face covering instructions](#) or watch this [video from the U.S. Surgeon General](#) to see ideas about creating a face covering with household items. Make your own face covering [instructions in American Sign Language](#).

If you make a face covering, multiple layers of tightly woven fabric, like quilting fabric or cotton sheets are best, but not required.

Can a business refuse service to visitors or customers who are not wearing a face covering?

Yes. Businesses open to the public may refuse entry to those who decline to wear a face covering. Businesses should not assume someone without a face covering falls under a medical exception, however, may accept verbal representation that they are not wearing a face covering because they fall within a specified exception.

How do I clean my cloth face covering?

It is best to wash your face covering after every use. It is especially important if the face covering became visibly dirty or wet. It may be helpful to have multiple face coverings so you have one to wear while another is being washed. Never wash disposable face masks.

Do I need to wear a face covering when I am exercising?

It is a good idea to wear a face covering while exercising around others (indoors or outdoors) if it does not interfere in the exercise, even when not required. Consider exercises that allow you to keep physical distance from others. Walking, running, and biking outside are examples of activities that do not require shared equipment or close contact with others.

I was confirmed to have COVID-19 and am better, do I still need to wear a face covering?

MDHHS recommends the use of masks, even for those who are fully vaccinated, in certain situations outlined in the [Rapid Public Health Alert: Face Mask Recommendations](#).

Are children in childcare centers required to wear face coverings?

Because most students remain unvaccinated, schools and childcare providers should continue to follow the COVID-19 prevention strategies outlined in the current version of the CDC's Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools for at least the remainder of the 2020-2021 academic school year, including masking when indoors.

Are there any precautions I should take with my face covering?

- When you put your face covering on and off, you will likely touch your face. Before putting on or taking off your face covering, always wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water, or if soap and water are not available, use a 60% alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face covering when wearing it or after taking it off. Take it off by the ear loops or ties. Clean your hands after every time you touch your face covering.
- Do not put a used face covering in places where others can touch them or where germs trapped in your face covering can touch other surfaces, such as counter tops or tables.
- Do not throw your face covering loose in a bag or backpack. Consider keeping a paper bag with you to store your face covering if you will be taking it off outside your house.

Are medical grade masks such as N95 or surgical masks better than homemade masks?

Medical grade masks need to be saved for use by health care providers only. Homemade cloth face coverings that cover the nose and mouth are good for the general public.

Can I wear a clear face mask?

Wearing a mask may make it difficult for some people to understand what others are saying

because words are muffled and visual cues are blocked. This is worse with short or one-word statements because there isn't context to help others figure out what we are trying to say.

Clear masks or cloth masks with a plastic panel may be used to aid in communication when interacting with the following groups:

- People who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Young children or students learning to read
- Students learning a new language
- People with disabilities
- People who need to see the proper shape of the mouth for making appropriate vowel sounds (for example, when singing)

Can I wear a face shield instead of a mask?

Face shields, including plastic shields and hybrid products that have fabric around the edges of the shield, are not a replacement for cloth face coverings. For people who are medically unable to tolerate a face covering, a face shield may be worn alone instead. A face shield may be worn over a mask to offer additional protection.

Can I wear a face covering with an exhalation valve or vent?

It is not recommended to wear masks with exhalation valves or vents because respiratory droplets may be expelled through the outlet. This type face covering does not prevent the wearer from transmitting the virus to others.

Why are masks recommended in some settings?

The use of face coverings is one more simple tool that may help reduce the spread of the virus – especially from people who are infected and don't know it yet. [Evidence](#), such as research showing that people without symptoms may be spreading the virus, that droplets produced with breathing, speaking, or singing spread COVID-19 from person to person and increasing case counts informed the decision to require face coverings.