Proper Use of Cloth Face Masks to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

How to Wear a Cloth Face Mask
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

CDC on Homemade Cloth Face Masks CDC recommends wearing cloth face masks in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face masks to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face masks fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

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

The cloth face masks 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.

Should cloth face masks be washed or otherwise cleaned regularly? How regularly? Yes. They should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use.

How do you safely sterilize/clean a cloth face mask? A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a face mask. How do you safely remove a used cloth face mask? Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing their face mask and wash hands immediately after removing.