Face Masks Save Lives

Updated guidance as of June 29, 2020.

If you're wondering why major health organizations like the CDC are recommending face masks, the answer is simple: [Research](#) indicates that doing so stops the spread of coronavirus and saves lives.

The most recent evidence comes from a worldwide analysis that included 169 countries. Researchers found that death rates increased by 43% in countries where people are not wearing masks, but just 2.8% in countries where mask-wearing is prevalent.

[Learn more about the study](#)

In addition, [the latest advice](#) from the World Health Organization recommends that everyone should wear a mask made from at least three layers of fabric out in public, and that people over 60 or with preexisting conditions should wear medical masks. This is a big step up from the organization's last recommendations on the topic of face masks.
The key? Ensure that you have the right kind of mask and wear them correctly.

Why should I wear a face mask?

According to the CDC, the main purpose of a face covering is to [corral any respiratory particles](#) and prevent infected individuals from spreading the virus to others.

However, a few things have changed recently. Now, it is recommended that everyone wears a face mask in public. One, of course, is the severe and widespread

nature of the pandemic itself. And two is the fact that many infected with the virus are asymptomatic and can spread it without even knowing they have it. Therefore, having everyone in public wear face coverings provides additional community protection.

Plus, it works: A study of more than 3,300 patients in the journal *Nature Medicine* showed that masks were effective at slowing the spread of coronavirus and other respiratory viruses.

What kind of face covering should it be?

For the general public, masks made from fabric such as cotton, bandanas, or other common household items are sufficient.

The CDC emphasizes that communities should reserve surgical masks and N-95 respirators for healthcare workers and medical first responders.

Can I make my own mask?

Yes, you can absolutely make your own mask to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The CDC has instructions on making both "sew" and "no-sew" masks available online.

How should my face mask fit?

If you're making a homemade mask, these tips will ensure that the mask is effective at stopping the spread of disease:

- It should have at least two layers of fabric.
- Add ties or ear loops so that it is snug but comfortable against the sides of your face.
- You should be able to wash your mask without it losing its proper fit or

shape.

How should I clean my mask?

Your mask should be washed (or replaced) frequently, depending on how often you leave the house. This is important, as the mask itself could become a method of spreading the virus if not cleaned properly. Fortunately, most of the cloth face coverings recommended by the CDC can be cleaned effectively in the washing machine. You can treat them as part of your regular laundry loads, just like socks and underwear.

How do I keep my glasses from fogging up while wearing my face mask?

If you wear glasses, then you know that face masks can pose an additional challenge: Foggy lenses as you breathe in and out, making it difficult to navigate your way through stores and other public spaces. To help with this challenge, Stephanie Frankel, O.D., an optometrist with Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, offers the following tips:

- **Get a mask with an adjustable nose piece.** Being able to adjust the fit of the mask against your nose and cheeks can help prevent foggy glasses. "Patients who are making their own masks can achieve this by sewing in a pipe cleaner or similar object to allow for adjustment," says Dr. Frankel.
- **Add some tape.** If your masks don't have an adjustable nose piece, you can solve the problem with a piece of surgical tape over the top of the mask where it meets the nose and cheeks.
- **Treat the glasses.** Another way to prevent foggy glasses is to treat the lenses. Dip them in soapy water, and then use a lens cloth to rub them clean. Or apply shaving cream to the lenses and clean them off with water. Both

approaches leave a thin film on the lenses that prevents fogging.

Should I wear a **mask while exercising**?

For that answer, we turn to orthopaedic expert Dr. Stephen Henry at the Sports Medicine Institute, who addresses the issue HERE.

The bottom line on masks

Masks can be an effective way to limit the spread of the coronavirus, and they're relatively easy to make on your own.

Beginning April 7, the University of Miami UHealth System has extended similar face-covering requirements to all of its facilities and locations. Patients arriving at these facilities will be provided a mask if needed. If patients are wearing a cloth mask, scarf, or bandana, they will be asked to remove it and will be provided with a surgical mask from the UHealth staff.

To make an appointment, call **305-689-2636** today.

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