

# Wear Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19



## Tri-County Health Department Strongly Recommends Use of Face Coverings

The Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) and the TCHD Board of Health strongly endorse the use of face coverings by all members of the public in settings where contact with others may occur.

The laboratory-based evidence is sufficiently strong such that the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control and the US Surgeon General have recently strongly endorsed the use of non-medical or cloth face masks. Face coverings are believed to be particularly important in preventing transmission to others, especially among the large percentage of COVID-19 infected persons who are asymptomatic and don't realize that they have a risk of transmitting infection to others.

## Frequently Asked Questions About Recommending Face Coverings During The COVID-19 Pandemic



### Why are face coverings recommended?

Recommendations have been made by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) for the use of cloth face coverings. This is one protection we can use in containing and preventing the transmission of COVID-19 in the community or public and private business setting. At this time, social distancing, revised business operations, recommendations for hand washing and disinfecting commonly used surfaces, are also examples of protections being recommended for containment of the virus.



### What is the evidence that face coverings are useful?

Transmission of the virus can occur when an infected person expels respiratory droplets and a non-infected person breathes these in through their nose and into the lungs, or touches a surface with the droplets on them and then touches their mouth or nose. Respiratory droplets are called aerosols and are a type of particle in the air. Larger sizes have the capacity to carry the COVID-19 virus through the air. [Stanford Medicine](#), [University of Colorado](#), [Arizona State University](#) and more have found that the cloth face covering, depending on the material, can protect the user from about 50% of particles in the air like those from coughs and sneezes. Of additional importance, these face coverings cover the mouth and nose, stopping the source of the aerosols produced by sick, pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic people.

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## Why have we been hearing different recommendations over time about the use of face coverings?

New information was discovered about the asymptomatic (infected but not showing symptoms) and pre-symptomatic (infected but not showing symptoms yet) transmission of the virus. The US Surgeon General, Dr. Jerome Adams, changed the recommendation after this new information was shared. Dr. Adams addressed this on April 3, 2020, that COVID-19 can be transmitted when people are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic. [Watch the Surgeon General explain evolution of CDC face mask guidance.](#)



## What type of face covering should I use?

The CDC recommends when in a public setting to use [a cloth face covering](#). Members of the public should preserve medical grade surgical masks and face piece filtering respirations (like the N95) for healthcare workers and first responders. This recommendation may change in the future as the market for surgical masks meets demand.

## Where should I use a face covering?

TCHD recommends using a face covering any time you are in a public setting where you may come into close contact with other people. Face coverings are especially important in areas where there may be gatherings of many people and social distancing is difficult to achieve.



## Do I need to social distance if I use a face covering?

Face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing. Face coverings should be used together with social distancing to provide the most protection from the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing also means avoiding gathering in large groups, limiting contact with others outside of your household and keeping 6 feet of physical distance between you and other people.

