

COVID-19 Guidance on Cloth Face Coverings

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Maintaining a 6-foot social distance from other individuals remains one of the most important ways to slow the spread of COVID-19; however, recent studies have indicated that some people with coronavirus don't have any symptoms, and that even those who later develop symptoms can pass the virus to others before showing symptoms. Because of this new evidence, wearing cloth face coverings in public places where social distancing measures are difficult (like grocery stores and pharmacies) can be done to help further slow the spread of COVID-19.

Cloth face coverings are NOT surgical masks or N-95 respirators.

- Surgical masks and N-95 respirators are critical supplies that must be reserved for health care workers and other medical first responders.
- Cloth face coverings can be quickly and inexpensively made from an old t-shirt, a bandana, hand towel or scarf, and rubber bands.
 - Watch U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams make a face covering in 45 seconds - <https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4>

Wearing a cloth face covering is not a substitution for following social distancing guidelines.

- All Iowans should continue to stay at home as much as possible, except for essential activities (like getting groceries or medicine).
- All Iowans should continue to stay at least 6 feet away from other individuals, and avoid groups larger than 10 people.
- All Iowans should continue to wash hands frequently, cover coughs and sneezes, and not leave their home if they are even mildly ill.

Wearing a cloth face covering in public can help protect others.

- It is important to protect the Iowans most vulnerable to serious complications of COVID-19, including older Iowans, and those with underlying health issues like heart disease, chronic lung disease, asthma, those who have suppressed immune systems, and those who are severely obese.
- In the event you had the virus that causes COVID-19, but had no symptoms or had not yet developed symptoms, wearing a cloth face covering when in public on essential errands can help protect others from infection if you cough or sneeze.

You should avoid touching or adjusting your cloth face mask while in public, clean your hands immediately if you do have to touch it, and launder the mask after each use and when it is visibly soiled.