

## **SAFETY TIPS FOR WEARING A MASK**

Masks are part of our strategy to keep you and your co-workers safe during this COVID 19 response. As we get more guidance, we will share new information with you. We are using many tools such as barriers, social distancing of at least 6 feet, frequently disinfect surfaces, and effective handwashing for protection at work. Masks can help. They provide a barrier so people who don't know they are sick do not spread the virus to others. They are not used to primarily protect you from getting the virus, but masks can help prevent others, including your co-workers from getting sick.

Securing a mask properly is just one piece of the puzzle. For masks to be effective, they must be worn correctly. Here's the right way to use a cloth face covering during the COVID-19 pandemic, plus common pitfalls that could affect your safety:

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### **Focus on the Fit**

Face coverings should be snug, but still comfortable, cover your whole nose and mouth, and extend underneath your chin, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). You should be able to breathe normally, but the sides of the mask should fit close to your face. (Kids under age 2 and people who have trouble breathing shouldn't wear cloth face coverings, per the CDC.)

Consider making a mask. The CDC suggests making a quick face covering using a scarf, bandana or towel and two rubber bands or hair elastics.



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### **Put it on Carefully**

Whether you're using a homemade mask, scarf, bandana or surgical mask, one of the most important steps before putting on or after taking off a face covering is to make sure your hands are clean, either by using hand sanitizer or washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

The World Health Organization suggests that people first clean their hands before putting a mask on and check that there are no holes or tears in the fabric.

When putting on your face covering, use the ties to place it on your face and cover your face and mouth snugly, making sure you can breathe easily. If your mask has a nose bridge, hold it in place, then loop the ear bands over your ears.



A bandana, scarf or cloth covering should be applied with the same care.

## Don't Touch the Mask While Wearing it

Use your mask as a reminder not to touch your face. You shouldn't be taking off, adjusting or moving your mask.

It is important to remember the outside of the mask is considered contaminated.

A recent laboratory study found that the virus that causes COVID-19 could survive on a face mask for up to seven days.

That means, if you must take off your mask for a quick breather, or an itch, practice good hand hygiene (sanitize or wash hands) after touching the face covering.



## Take it Off Carefully too

There's some technique involved in taking off a mask, too. Be extra careful not to touch the front of your mask and your eyes, nose and mouth when removing your face covering. Wash your hands immediately after handling your mask, according to the CDC.

The key is to avoid accidentally contaminating your hands or touching your face and use appropriate hand hygiene, either by using hand sanitizer or washing your hands with soap and water afterwards.



## Wash Your Mask Often

Currently, there are no strict guidelines about washing and sanitizing cloth face coverings and masks. According to the CDC, machine-washing your mask is enough to disinfect your cloth face covering.

You should wash it regularly, or after each time you wear it. If you don't have immediate access to laundry, consider using hand or dish soap and water, remember to wash your hands afterwards.



## Keep Social Distancing

Wearing a face covering is just one additional step that you can take to help stop the spread of COVID-19, but it's not a replacement for the other important prevention measures, such as washing your hands properly for at least 20 seconds and maintaining 6 feet of social distancing.

