

Using Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

If you need to leave your home, wear a cloth face covering.

The NH Department of Health and Human Services recommends all Granite Staters wear cloth face coverings when outside of the home to help slow the spread of COVID-19. This advice is based on new data about how COVID-19 can spread before a person has any symptoms. A mask helps protect others around you if you are infected and don't know it.

A cloth face covering is one more precaution we can take to help slow the spread of COVID-19 – and is not a substitute for physical distancing and other prevention measures. You still need to stay at least 6 feet away from people, even when wearing a face covering.



The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. These types of masks are critical supplies that must be reserved for our health care workers and first responders. Please make your own face coverings with household items (see more on the back).

Examples of when to wear a face covering	Examples of when you don't need to wear a face covering
Trips to the grocery store, pharmacy, doctor or hospital	At home, if everyone in the home isn't showing symptoms
Essential workers at a grocery store, pharmacy, or other business setting where they cannot maintain at least 6 feet distance between themselves and others	Going for a walk in the woods or in your neighborhood. But bring one in case you encounter other people and stop to chat
At home if you are sick and have other people in the house	Going for a run on the bike path, if it's not too crowded
Home care workers caring for vulnerable populations	Who should never wear a mask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children under the age of 2 • anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious • anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance
Riding the bus, taxi, or ride share	
Walking on a busy and crowded street	

What is a cloth face covering?

A cloth face covering is any well-secured cloth (like a bandana, scarf, or homemade mask) that covers your mouth and nose. It does not adequately protect the wearer and is not a substitute for social distancing, but can protect others in case the wearer is infected with COVID-19 and has not started showing symptoms. Cloth face coverings are recommended to help preserve Personal Protective Equipment for frontline healthcare workers. For more information about how to wear and make cloth face coverings, see the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19/face-coverings).

Why are you recommending this now?

There is a lot we are still learning about COVID-19. However, there is more evidence that people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus, and that droplets produced when breathing, speaking, or clearing your throat may spread COVID-19 from person-to-person. We continue to think staying home and practicing physical distancing and good hand hygiene are the most important ways to stop the spread of COVID-19. By recommending that Granite Staters use a face covering, we are adding one more action to help reduce the spread.

Putting a cloth face covering on

- With clean hands determine the outside of the cloth face covering and that should face away from you.
- Grasp the cloth face covering by the ear loops and place a loop around each ear.
- Make sure the cloth face covering covers your mouth AND nose.
- Avoid touching the front of your cloth face covering while it is in place.
- If it becomes soiled you should replace it.
- If you touch the cloth face covering wash your hands.



Removing a cloth face covering

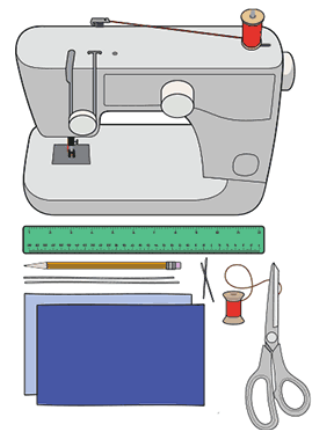
- Grasp the ear loops and pull forward over your ears to remove.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth when removing it
- Fold the cloth face covering so that the area facing outward, is folded over itself.
- Place a cloth face covering in a plastic bag for laundering later, taking care not to touch it to the outside of the plastic bag.
- Remove and store cloth face covering properly and safely.
- Immediately wash your hands after removing it.

Clean cloth face coverings daily, by hand or machine, using detergent.

A washing machine should suffice to properly wash a cloth face covering. Make sure it's completely dry before using. You should have a few on hand so you can rotate for washing.

Make your own.

CDC has [instructions on making your own coverings](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19/face-coverings) in several different methods, including machine or hand-sewn, a no-sew method with a t-shirt and scissors, and a no-sew method with a bandana.



For more information, visit: <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/>

**Adapted from the Vermont Department of Health*