

Face Covering Facts

We all know that people spread respiratory droplets by coughing and sneezing. But did you know that we also spread respiratory droplets by talking, laughing, and singing?

These respiratory droplets are why **the Oregon Health Authority strongly recommends that Oregonians wear cloth face coverings** and why face coverings are required in many public settings.

Know the Facts

Fact: We wear face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

Face coverings help us keep our respiratory droplets to ourselves, which means people who wear them prevent spreading the virus to others. (1) There are many types of face coverings, scarves, bandanas, and homemade coverings with loops that go over the ears.

Fact: Face coverings don't cause dangerous carbon dioxide to build up.

Face coverings don't cause enough carbon dioxide build-up to cause ill effects in otherwise healthy people. (2) In fact, masks have a tighter seal than face coverings, and farm workers, custodial staff, and hospital employees all wear them to stay safe in their workplaces.

Remember, though, that the following people should not wear face coverings:

- Children under age 2 years
- Anyone who has a medical condition that makes it hard to breathe when wearing a face covering.
- Anyone who has a disability that prevents the individual from wearing a face covering.

Fact: Cloth face coverings do not increase your risk of infection when used properly in public settings.

We wear cloth face coverings to help protect other people in case we have the virus—but no, wearing a cloth face covering doesn't raise your risk of infection. (3) Be sure to wash your hands before and after touching your face covering and wash it daily.

Fact: Face coverings do not cause the virus to “reactivate.”

Once you have a viral infection, wearing a face covering does not make it worse or make it last longer. It does, however, help you keep from spreading or passing it on to others. (4)

Definitions

To make sure we're all on the same page, here's what the Oregon Health Authority means when it uses these words...

- **Cloth face coverings** are protective barriers we use outside to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Some examples include homemade cloth face coverings, scarves, and bandanas.



- **Masks** are medical-grade equipment, including surgical masks and N-95 respirators.



- **Face shields** are sheets of clear plastic that cover the forehead, extends below the chin, and wraps around the sides of the face.



1. [Chu DK, Akl EA, Duda S, et al. Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis](#)
2. [Derek K Chu, Elie A Akl, Stephanie Duda, Karla Solo, Sally Yaacoub, Holger J Schünemann, on behalf of the COVID-19 Systematic Urgent Review Group Effort \(SURGE\) study authors* Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis](#)
3. [Jessica J. Bartoszko, Mohammed Abdul Malik Farooqi, Waleed Alhazzani, Mark Loeb. Medical masks vs N95 respirators for preventing COVID-19 in healthcare workers: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized trials](#)
4. [Staymates, Matthew E. National Institute of Standards and Technology \(NIST\)](#)

You can get this document free of charge in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact Mavel Morales at 1-844-882-7889, 711 TTY or OHA.ADAModifications@dhsosha.state.or.us.