

How to Properly Wear a Facemask for COVID-19 Protection



When you have symptoms of cold, flu, COVID-19 or other viruses and infections, properly wearing a surgical facemask can help protect others from getting sick. It is important that you follow infection prevention precautions when putting the mask on and taking the mask off. If you are one of those people [who need to wear a facemask](#), follow these instructions for how to put on and take off a surgical mask.

There are several types of facemasks. The most common are:

- Medical (or surgical) masks – for general public use
- N95 particle respirator masks – for health care professionals

How to Put the Mask On

1. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Dry your hands with a clean paper towel and throw the paper towel away.
2. Check the mask for any defects such as a tear or missing tie or ear loop. Throw away any that are defective.
3. Make sure the exterior (usually yellow or blue) side of the mask is facing out, away from your face.
4. Place the mask on your face with the blue side facing out and the stiff, bendable edge at the top by your nose.
5. If the mask has ear loops, put one loop around each ear.

6. If the mask has ties, pick up the mask by the ties and tie the upper ties behind your head with a bow.
7. Once the mask is in place, use your index finger and thumb to pinch the bendable top edge of the mask around the bridge of your nose.
8. If the mask has a lower tie, then once the mask is fitted to the bridge of your nose, tie the lower ties behind your head with a bow.
9. Make sure the mask is completely secure. Make sure it covers your nose and mouth so that the bottom edge is under your chin.
10. Wash your hands.

Removing the Mask

1. Wash your hands before removing the mask.
2. Do not touch the inside of the mask (the part over nose and mouth). It may be contaminated from your breathing, coughing or sneezing.
3. Untie or remove the ear loops and remove the mask by the straps.
4. Throw the mask in the trash.
5. Wash your hands.

Please Note: If you are using a reusable cloth mask, at the end of the day, take the mask off from the straps (not touching the front), place in a pillowcase to keep the ties with the mask. Wash it in the washing machine with hot water and completely dry on medium or high heat.

This information has been reviewed and approved by Infection Preventionist Rosine Angbanzan, MPH (March 2020)