

From our Registered Nurse:

What you need to know about masks

Will wearing a mask protect me?

You will get a small amount of protection, but masks are mostly to protect the people around you. A cloth mask will stop some droplets from getting through, but many are so small that they will slide in between the fibers of the mask. Bigger drops will get caught and stopped however. Since drops are bigger closer to your mouth, a mask will stop them more easily. Picture a sneeze. If you don't cover your mouth, you could spray someone standing several feet away from you. If you cover your mouth, most of the spray will be blocked. Now imagine the other way around: if someone else sneezes, covering your own mouth doesn't work as well.

If I'm healthy, do I need to wear a mask?

Yes. You might be sick and not know it. Most cases of coronavirus are very mild. Some people get the virus without showing any symptoms at all. These people can still pass the infection on to others. There are other ways that the mask will help you, however. While wearing a mask you are less likely to touch your face. This will make you less likely to contract the virus by touching an infected surface and then touching your nose, mouth, or eyes. Also, the mask gives shows everyone else that you are participating in safe social distancing.

Do I need a special kind of mask?

No. Any cloth mask that covers your nose and mouth will do. You do not need to wear a medical or industrial grade mask. Many groups/organizations have started distributing free masks. You can also make one yourself. There are many patterns available online to help you get started. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inNeAFwdX5s> The most important feature of a mask is that it should be something you can wear for long periods of time. If your mask is so uncomfortable that you have to take off a lot, it won't help.

How do I wear a mask properly?

Make sure it covers your nose and mouth at the same time. Do not pull the mask down to talk. Do not let your nose stick out over the top of your mask. After you have placed your mask, do your best not to touch it until it is time to take it off. You can wash your mask with your regular laundry on the hottest setting the fabric can handle.

Where should I wear a mask?

You should wear a mask any time you go out in public areas, especially where it is difficult to keep 6 feet of distance. This means stores, work, even public streets and parks.



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I have a mask on, do I need to keep 6 feet of distance?

Yes, if at all possible. If everyone is wearing a mask, it can be okay to move past someone, in a grocery store aisle for example. But that doesn't mean you should stay close to other people for longer periods of time. Using masks and social distancing together makes spreading the virus much harder.

Sources:

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