



Face coverings

Cloth face covering: A cloth face covering is a piece of material used to cover the nose and mouth, often in the form of a homemade cloth mask. Textile (cloth) covers are intended to keep the person wearing one from spreading respiratory secretions when talking, sneezing, or coughing. They are not personal protective equipment (PPE), and it is uncertain whether cloth face coverings protect the wearer. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has guidance available on design, use, and maintenance of cloth face coverings.

- Wear face coverings with two or more layers to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- CDC does not recommend the use of gaiters. Evaluation of this type of face cover is on-going but the effectiveness is unknown at this time.
- “How to Select, Wear, and Clean Your Mask”
[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html)

Face mask: Face masks, a protective mask covering the nose and mouth, are PPE and are often referred to as surgical masks or procedure masks. Use face masks according to product labeling and local, state, and federal requirements. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-cleared surgical masks are designed to protect against splashes and sprays and are prioritized for use when such exposures are anticipated, including surgical procedures. Face masks not regulated by FDA, such as some procedure masks, which are typically used for isolation purposes, may not provide protection against splashes and sprays.

Face shield: A face shield is personal protective equipment typically made of clear plastic. It protects the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, and mouth during patient care procedures and activities that carry the risk of generating splashes of blood, body fluids, excretions, or secretions.

Respirator: A respirator is a personal protective device worn on the face, covers at least the nose and mouth, and is used to reduce the wearer’s risk of inhaling hazardous airborne particles (including dust particles and infectious agents), gases, or vapors. Respirators are certified by the CDC/National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, including those intended for use in healthcare.

Source: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/return-to-work.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/return-to-work.html)

CDC regularly updates the public and healthcare professionals regarding COVID-19 diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. Please visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for the latest information and guidance.