



INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

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For Immediate Release

GUIDANCE REGARDING THE VOLUNTARY DONNING OF CLOTH MASKS TO PROTECT AGAINST COVID-19

[Greenwich, CT] – On April 3rd, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed updated guidance for the public regarding COVID-19. The CDC recommends that everyone wear a cloth face covering while in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (grocery stores, pharmacies, etc). These facial coverings should be worn specifically in areas where COVID-19 (the disease caused by the SARS-COV-2 coronavirus) is spreading from person to person. This guidance is intended especially for areas of significant community based transmission.

It is important to note that the cloth face coverings described by the CDC are NOT surgical masks or N-95 respirators. There is still a shortage of available masks for those who are on the front lines protecting the public against the virus. These critical assets must be reserved for health care workers and other medical first responders to help protect them against disease contraction and spread.

Wearing cloth face coverings is an additional public health measure that can help to limit the spread of COVID-19. COVID-19 is believed to spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person in respiratory droplets from someone who is infected. People who are infected often have symptoms of illness. Spread may also occur when people are asymptomatic, when they have few symptoms, or before they develop symptoms. By wearing a cloth face covering, when you breathe, talk, cough, laugh, yawn, sneeze, or sigh in public you are less likely to get these droplets on a surface in front of you and can therefore reduce the spread of disease. CDC guidance dictates that cloth masks can serve as a barrier and are primarily meant to prevent the spread of disease from the wearer to others, including first responders, healthcare workers, grocery store clerks, etc.

These cloth face coverings are not useful during prolonged close interactions involving potentially sick people. They do not provide universal protection against COVID-19. During the SARS outbreak in 2003, it was found that wearing masks alone was 68% effective against prevention of the virus while the implementation of proper handwashing and adequate personal protective equipment was found to be 91% effective. If instituted properly alongside additional preventative measures, cloth face coverings can help to limit the spread of disease. It remains imperative that we all continue to adhere to everyday preventative measures in order to properly protect ourselves and those around us from spreading the virus. Some of these protective measures include, but are not limited to:

- Frequent hand washing (with soap and water thoroughly for 20 seconds at a time)
- Not touching your face (average person touches their face 23 times per minute)
- Social distancing (6 feet apart)
- Cleaning commonly touched surfaces (even your cellphone)
- Maintaining proper hygiene (cough or sneeze into your sleeve, etc.)
- Staying home as often as possible (do NOT put yourselves or members of the public at risk)

Cloth face coverings can be fashioned from common household items or made at home from low cost materials. The CDC provides some essential guidance for creating, donning, and cleaning these face coverings. Some important aspects include, but are not limited to:

Cloth face coverings should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

They should be routinely washed depending on frequency of use

A washing machine should suffice in adequately washing a face covering

When donning or doffing a face covering, individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, or mouth and make sure to wash hands thoroughly before and after application.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Specific guidance on how to fashion a cloth facemask can be found on the CDC website. Please visit the below resources for additional guidance or contact us for more information.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/DIY-cloth-face-covering-instructions.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

<https://www.greenwichct.gov/575/Health-Department>

Also, please follow us on Facebook for important updates pertaining to COVID-19.

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