

The Facts

Considerations for Well Fitted Masks



OCCUPATIONAL AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

Updated: 1/20/22

Correct and consistent mask use is a critical step everyone can take to prevent getting and spreading COVID-19. Per current CDC guidance, masks work best when everyone wears them, but not all masks provide the same protection. When choosing a mask, consider how well it fits, how well it filters the air, and how many layers it has. It is important that you choose a mask that fits snugly against your face and a mask with layers to keep your respiratory droplets in and other's out.

Masks

- Masks include surgical masks, cloth masks, and masks that meet standards.
- Ensure your mask fits you snugly and does not have large gaps around your nose, chin, or cheeks.
- Ensure cloth masks are made with breathable, tightly woven fabric, such as cotton with three layers.
- Some masks are designed and tested to ensure they perform at a consistent level. These masks are labeled to tell you what standard they meet (ASTM 3502).
- Surgical or procedure disposable masks are readily available. They are single use. Ensure they fit snugly with no large, loose gaps.

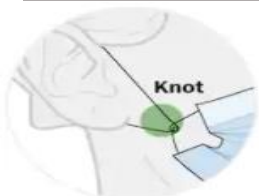
Respirators

- Made of specific materials to filter the air, are tight fitting, and contain droplets you breathe, cough, or sneeze out so you do not spread them to others.
- Provide better filtration if they are fitted and if worn properly the entire time it is in use, can provide a higher level of protection.
- Types of respirators include N95, KN95 and KF94.
- Like masks, ensure the respirator fits you snugly with no large, loose gaps.
- Discard when respirator is dirty, damaged, or difficult to breathe through.

Check Your Fit- Keep it **SNUG**

- Check for gaps around your nose, cheeks, and chin. You should **not** be able to see or feel any open spots around the edges of your mask. A nose wire helps the seal.
- When you breathe, you should see/feel your mask suction against your face.
- Signs of leakage include eyeglasses fogging up or steamy breath coming from the sides of the mask.

If these tests fail, try a different kind of mask.



Ear loop knots to tighten fit on surgical mask.



Secure metal bridge over nose.



A second cloth mask over a surgical mask.

For further information visit the link:

[Types of Masks and Respirators | CDC](#)

What to Avoid When Selecting Masks

- Masks made of materials such as leather or plastic that will limit breathing capability.
- Double masking with a **KN95** or **KF94**. One is enough.
- Loose knit fabrics. Fabrics that are see through, have holes, or allow light to pass through.
- **ANY** loose-fitting mask or respirator- surgical masks, cloth masks, N95, KN95, KF94, etc.
- Exhalation valves. The CDC has stated that these type of face coverings are **less** effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19.
- The use of a face shield as a substitute of a mask. The large gaps this creates does not protect the user or others from respiratory droplets.
- Neck gaiters are discouraged as they are not recommended since they are not tight fitting.

Tips to Improve Your Mask

- It is most important to wear a well-fitted mask or respirator correctly that is comfortable for you and that provides good protection.
- If wearing a fabric or surgical mask, wear two masks. It is recommended to start with a non-medical disposable mask with a cloth face covering on top.
- Choose a mask with a nose wire.
- Add a filter to a two-layer cloth face covering.
- Aim for masks made of three-layers.
- Choose mask with tight-weave 100% cotton.
- Masks with pleats or folds are ideal because it allows them to stretch to fit the entirety of your nose and mouth.
- Keep your mask clean. It is recommended that cloth face coverings are washed daily with soap and hot water.