

HELP SLOW THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 BY WEARING A CLOTH FACE MASK

For Immediate Release: April 23, 2020

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Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19 By Wearing a Cloth Face Mask

BURLINGTON, VT – As the state begins taking measured steps toward re-opening, it is more important than ever to make wearing cloth face coverings a habit whenever we leave home – and to be sure to wear them the right way.

Recent data has revealed more about how the virus can spread, even before a person shows any symptoms. Droplets produced when you breathe, speak, or clear your throat can spread COVID-19 from person to person. Since you may be infected and not know it, wearing a face covering helps protect people around you from exposure to the virus.

Wearing a face covering is only one of the things we all must do to prevent the spread of the virus. We all still need to stay at least 6 feet away from people, even when wearing a mask, practice good hand hygiene and follow the state's [Stay Home, Stay Safe](#) guidance.

“When we’re all taking these essential precautions, we’re all a little safer,” said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. “Wearing a face covering can take some getting used to, but this may be the new normal for some time. So, help protect your loved ones and your fellow Vermonters by wearing a face covering and knowing how to do so properly.”

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. These types of masks are critical supplies that must be reserved for health care workers and first responders.

For businesses in operation now, employees must wear non-medical cloth face coverings (bandanna, scarf, or non-medical mask, etc.) over their nose and mouth when in the presence of others, according to [new guidelines from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development](#)

[\(link is external\)](#).

When using a face mask or covering:

Your mask should include multiple layers of fabric and allow for breathing without restriction.

The face covering must be worn properly to be effective and avoid the spread of germs:

- Wash your hands before putting it on.
- Be sure your mouth and nose are covered.
- Hook loops around your ears or tie it snugly.
- Do not touch the mask or pull it down while in public.
- Keep it on until you get home.
- Remove the mask without touching your eyes, nose or mouth, then wash your hands immediately.
- Wash the mask and make sure it's completely dry before using again. Have a few on hand so you can rotate for washing.

Some people should never wear a mask, including:

- Children under the age of 2
- Anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious
- Anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance

How can I get a cloth face covering?

1. **Make one:** The Centers for Disease Control has instructions on [making your own coverings \(link is external\)](#) in several different methods, including machine or hand-sewn, a no-sew method with a t-shirt and scissors, and a no-sew method with a bandanna.
2. **Buy one:** Find a list of places at vem.vermont.gov/covid19/facecovering [\(link is external\)](#)
3. **Reach out to your community.** Check out places like Front Porch Forum to connect with other Vermonters making masks.

Read our full guidance on [cloth face masks](#) and get up to date information about the pandemic at healthvermont.gov/covid19.

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