

Face Covering FAQs

What is a face covering? What kind of face covering do I need to wear?

In most circumstances a cloth face covering is appropriate for the purposes of this [policy](#). A cloth facemask is fabric material that covers the nose and mouth. It can be secured to the head with ties or straps or simply wrapped around the lower face. It can be made of a variety of materials, such as cotton, silk, or linen. A cloth face covering may be factory-made or sewn by hand or can be improvised from household items such as scarfs, T-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels.

Surgical masks, respirators and other personal protective equipment (PPE) continue to be in short supply and are reserved for use only in settings and where direct care is provided for those with, or who are suspected of having, the COVID-19 infection, and when participating in certain high-risk procedures

How well do cloth face coverings work to prevent spread of COVID-19?

There is scientific evidence that use of cloth face coverings during a pandemic helps reduce disease transmission. Their primary role is to reduce the release of infectious particles into the air when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes, including someone who has COVID-19 but feels well.

How should I care for a cloth face covering?

It's a good idea to wash your cloth face covering after each use, or at least daily. Cloth face coverings should be laundered with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot cycle. (If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face). Discard cloth face coverings when they no longer effectively cover your nose and mouth, have stretched out or there is damage to ties or straps, when it won't stay on your face, or has holes or tears. Please reference this [guidance](#) for further information.

When do I have to wear a face mask?

You should wear face coverings when in public places, particularly when those locations are indoors or in other areas where physical distancing is not possible, including in the following situations if and when social distancing is not possible:

- Inside or in line to enter any indoor public space
- While using public transportation, taxi or ride share service
- While at work whenever you are unable to maintain at least 6-feet of distance between you and other people
- When interacting with other people
- Working in any space where food is prepared
- Working in or walking through common areas, such as hallways, stairways, elevators, and parking facilities

- In any room or enclosed area where other people (except for members of your own family) are present when unable to physically distance
- While outdoors in public spaces when maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet from persons is not possible

What if I am unable to wear a face covering for medical reasons?

If your position allows and you have your manager's approval, you can continue to work from home until the public health threat posed by COVID-19 has abated and masks are no longer required. If your position does not allow you to work from home and you have a medical condition where you feel you are unable to wear a face covering, reach out to your manager and HR manager. HR will provide you with proper procedures to request the accommodation.

What if I choose to *not* wear a face covering while at work?

Unless mandated by state or local law, you are required to cover your face in situations where social distancing is not possible (less than 6 feet distance). In a private office or workstation, the use of the face covering is optional, but must be nearby should a situation arise where social distancing is not possible. However, you will be required to wear a face covering in common spaces like bathrooms and break-rooms and in hallways if others are present.

Where do I get a face covering?

The company has provided cloth masks to many groups of employees already. You can use a company-issued cloth mask or bring your own face covering from home. If you have not received one and have difficulty securing your own, please work with your manager. Cloth masks will be provided to core offices and branch locations as needed.

In care settings where PPE is required, it will be provided to you.

How do I know when to use a cloth face covering or a surgical/medical/N95 mask?

Please reference this [guidance](#) for information.

Should my patient or client be wearing a face covering?

Yes, wherever possible those we provide care and services for should also follow these guidelines. This is a great opportunity to provide education for our patients, clients and their families/guardians. There are circumstances where our clients are unable or unwilling to wear a face covering. In those instances, the plan of care/treatment may need to be adjusted to limit community activities, etc. Reach out to your supervisor or your Director of Clinical Practice to discuss the specific circumstances to ensure the health and safety of all.

What should I do if I sit in a temporary space or shared "hotel" office, cubicle or workspace?

Completely clean the workspace with disinfecting sprays/wipes upon entering and leaving the workspace. Out of consideration to your fellow teammates, please leave the space well sanitized.