



Guidance for Use of Cloth Face Coverings

April 22, 2020

COVID-19 can be transmitted when a person is asymptomatic, meaning they do not have any symptoms, or before symptoms develop. The Nashua Division of Public Health and Community Services (DPHCS), along with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS), now recommends that the general public wear cloth face coverings in situations where they cannot maintain social distancing. This public health guidance is being recommended in order to reduce asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission of COVID-19 within our community.

There are two levels of facemasks:

- 1) Source Control:** Source control masks (ex: surgical masks and homemade cloth face coverings, such as cloth masks, bandanas, and scarves) are used by individuals to protect other people from their respiratory droplets. These masks should be worn by symptomatic individuals, healthcare workers during their shift, and people that have to perform an essential activity where it is hard to maintain social distancing. Source control masks alone will not protect you from COVID-19.
- 2) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** PPE is used by healthcare workers to protect themselves from infection when conducting aerosol-generating procedures on a patient with COVID-19. The types of masks used for these procedures should be N95 respirators.

Source control masks, including cloth face coverings, are **NOT** personal protective equipment. Wearing a cloth face covering in public is a precaution to slow the spread of COVID-19 and does not protect the wearer from COVID-19, but they can protect others in case the wearer is pre-symptomatically or asymptotically transmitting the virus. When wearing a cloth face covering, the wearer should continue to practice social distancing by staying at least 6 feet away from others and hand washing to properly protect themselves and others.

When to Wear a Cloth Face Covering	When Not Need to Wear a Cloth Face Covering
Trips to the grocery store, pharmacy, doctor or to receive medical care	At home, only if everyone in the home isn't showing symptoms
Essential workers at a grocery store, pharmacy, or other business setting where it is hard to maintain at least 6 feet distance from others	Going for a walk in the woods or in your neighborhood. We recommend to bring one in case stop to talk with other people.
At home if you are sick live with other people	Going for a walk or run on a less crowded trail
Home care workers caring for vulnerable populations	Who should never wear a mask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under the age of 2 • Anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious • Anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance
Riding the bus, taxi, or ride share	
Walking on a busy or crowded street or trail	

During the rare occurrences where you are unable to maintain your social distancing and you choose to wear a cloth face covering in public, we encourage you to practice the following tips to wear one safely:



- Continue to wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, continue to social distance by staying at least 6 feet away from others, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Properly put on the cloth face covering:
 - Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
 - Determine the outside of the cloth face covering. That side will face away from you.
 - Grab the cloth face covering by the ear loops and place a loop around each ear.
 - Make sure the cloth face covering covers your mouth AND nose, without any gap.
 - Avoid touching the front of your cloth face covering while it is in place.
 - If it becomes soiled, you should replace it.
- Properly remove the cloth face covering:
 - Grab the ear loops and pull forward over your ears to remove. Avoid touching the front.
 - Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing it.
 - Fold the cloth face covering so that the area facing outward is folded over itself.
 - Place a cloth face covering in a plastic bag for cleaning later, avoid letting it touch the outside of the bag.
 - Immediately wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub after removing it.
- Clean your cloth face coverings after each use, by hand or machine, using hot water with regular detergent and drying on hot setting. Make sure it's completely dry before using. You should have a few on hand so you can rotate for washing.
- If you are using a single-use mask, please replace it with a new one as soon as it is damp and do not re-use.
- For more information and to learn how to properly put on and take off cloth face coverings, please watch this video created by the World Health Organization (WHO):
https://youtu.be/M4olt47pr_o

The CDC has instructions on how to make your own cloth face coverings 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 bandana. You can view those instructions here: <https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4>

We would like to remind you that the most effective way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community is through social distancing and practicing proper personal hygiene. If you have to do an essential activity and cannot maintain social distancing during that activity, cloth face covering will protect others from your potential asymptomatic transmission. If you are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness, please stay at home and contact your healthcare provider.