



COVID-19

AFMC Face Covering Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why are cloth face coverings recommended now?

Recent data suggest that infected people without symptoms may unknowingly transmit the virus to others. A cloth covering is not intended to protect the wearer, but it may prevent the spread of virus from wearer to others.

When to wear cloth face coverings

Effectively immediately, per the Secretary of Defense's direction, to the extent practical without significantly impacting mission, all individuals on Department of Defense (DoD) property and installations and facilities are required to wear cloth covering when they cannot maintain six feet of physical distance in public areas or work centers. This does not include or apply to a service member's personal residence on a military installation.

All individuals in DoD property, installations, and facilities will wear cloth face coverings when they cannot maintain six feet of physical distance in public areas or work centers.

How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings

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, such as multiple folds of fabric
- ◆ allow for breathing without restriction
- ◆ be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

The cloth face coverings recommended are **NOT** surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Should cloth face coverings be washed or otherwise cleaned regularly? How regularly?

Yes. They should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use. Some Public Health departments recommend cleaning after each use (or at least daily).

Reference: California Dept. of Public Health <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Face-Coverings-Guidance.aspx>

How does one safely sanitize/clean a cloth face covering?

A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a cloth face covering. Recommendations are to wash in hot water and use the hot setting on dryer.

How does one safely remove a used cloth face covering?

Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing their cloth face covering and wash hands immediately after removing.

How is this different from other PPE used in my worksite?

Cloth facemasks are a supplement to social distancing, handwashing and other methods to decrease the spread of disease. They are not a replacement for proper safety equipment in the workplace. Whatever PPE was in use prior to this CDC guidance should still be used. If it is safe to do so, cloth facemasks may be used in addition to your routine PPE if you are unable to achieve appropriate social distancing in your work area.

Dos & Don'ts

Adapted from: <https://healthcare.utah.edu/healthfeed/postings/2020/04/face-masks.php>

Dos:

- ◆ Do wear a face mask if you have symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever, shortness of breath, a new cough, and muscle aches.
- ◆ Do follow CDC and DoD guidelines for proper wear of cloth masks.
- ◆ Do wash your hands. Cleaning your hands regularly is still one of your best protections against COVID-19.

Don'ts:

- ◆ Don't hoard clinical masks. Our health care workers need clinical masks to help take care of our community.
- ◆ Don't stop social distancing or washing your hands. A face mask will not completely protect you from the coronavirus.

Proper glove wearing strategy

At this time, gloves are not recommended by the CDC for routine use in a public setting. Use of gloves may give the user a false sense of safety due to the barrier between the environment and a user's hands but the risk of contamination is still there. Users should be cautious of not touching their face while wearing gloves and still follow proper hand washing techniques to minimize risk of contamination.

References:

CDC issued instructions for DIY/homemade cloth face covers and proper wear: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

CDC Cloth Face Cover FAQs:

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

Join CHPS online at [USAFwellness.com](https://usafwellness.com) to continue your wellness journey:

- ◆ Keep informed with the latest information regarding COVID-19
- ◆ Use *Daily Pursuits* to set your own goals and with daily suggestions to improve all areas of health and wellness
- ◆ Track activity and steps to stick with your fitness goal or create new ones – you can even link wearables like a FitBit™
- ◆ Feel like dinner is an episode of 'Chopped'? Check out the recipe section for some new ideas!
- ◆ Check out the *Health Library* to learn more about a variety of health topics
- ◆ Stay connected to your support team by forming Alliances with friends and co-workers for continued support of your health and wellness goals

Contact CHPS virtually for assistance with health and wellness topics: As long as the CHPS team remains onsite, they can be contacted to help participants with various health and wellness topics and get linked to health and wellness resources at: CHPSsupport@us.af.mil

For questions or problems with the website please contact CHPS at: CHPSsupport@us.af.mil