

## WEARING MASKS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus)

Updated January 28, 2022

**Michiganders, regardless of vaccination status, should wear a mask in all indoor public settings as described in the [Public Health Advisory](#).**

Local health departments, establishments, sports organizers and school districts may have additional rules that must be followed. Further, the CDC requires that all persons – regardless of vaccination status – wear masks on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation and hubs.

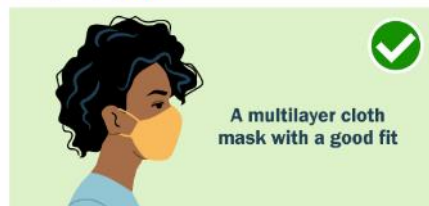
### How do I choose a mask?

Masks provide different levels of protection depending on the type and how they are used. The best mask is the most protective mask that you will wear consistently and fits you properly. [For the most protection, there are two important considerations when choosing a mask:](#)

1. A **well-fitting mask** adheres to the side of your face and covers your nose and mouth.
2. A **mask with good filtration** that has layers of tightly woven materials.

KN95 face masks or similar masks or respirators are a good choice in high-risk and high-transmission settings, **provided it fits you properly**. Please see the graphic to the right to help you determine which mask is right for you.

### Recommended



### Not Recommended



### What do I look for when choosing a KN95 mask?

When choosing a KN95 mask, consider how well it fits and read the manufacturer's instructions. These instructions should include information on how to wear, store and properly dispose of the mask. Masks have markings printed on the product to indicate they are authentic; see [CDC factors to consider when planning to purchase respirators from another country](#). KN95 masks, depending on the standards they are designed to meet, filter varying levels of particles in the air.

### How do I wear a mask?

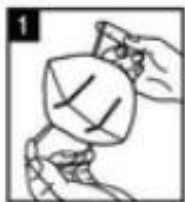
Your mask should cover your mouth and nose and be secure under your chin. A mask that does not fit properly may not protect you and those around you.

- Check that your mask **fits snugly** over your nose, mouth and chin.
- Check for gaps by cupping your hands around the outside edges of the mask.
- Make sure no air is flowing from the area near your eyes or from the sides of the mask.
- If the mask has a good fit, you will feel the air become warmer as it enters through the front of the mask and may be able to see the mask material move in and out with each breath.
- [Additional considerations for wearing a face mask](#).

### How do I wear a KN95 mask?

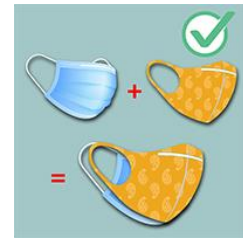
1. Clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water, washing for 20 seconds or while saying the ABCs, before handling your KN95 mask.
2. Position the mask under your chin with the nose piece facing up.
3. Place the straps of the mask over each of your ears.
4. Adjust the straps to have the mask fitting snugly to the face without any gaps. Your nose and mouth should be completely covered. Facial hair may prevent the mask's ability to seal to the face. Push down the nose clip firmly to your nose with both hands (see picture below).
5. Use both hands to cover the mask and tighten the seal.

**NOTE: If the mask has no gaps along the edge, the air inside the mask will become warm.**



## Wearing two masks is an easy way to increase your protection against COVID-19.

Wearing two masks (called double masking) is when you wear a disposable three-ply medical-style mask **and** a cloth mask on top\*. The protection offered by a mask is limited by the way the mask fits. An ill-fitting mask does not offer the best protection against COVID-19. Double masking is an easy way to improve fit, which also improves protection. The more particles that are blocked, the better you are protected against getting COVID-19.



One party wearing double masks.**	Exposure reduced by 83%
Both parties wearing double masks.**	Exposure reduced by 96%
Both parties wearing medical masks knotted and tucked properly.**	Exposure reduced by 96%

Data Source: [Maximizing Fit for Cloth and Medical Procedure Masks to Improve Performance and Reduce SARS-CoV-2 Transmission and Exposure, 2021](#)

\* Note: **Double masking should only include one disposable three-ply medical procedure mask and one cloth mask.** You should not wear two disposable masks, or combine an N95 or KN95 with any other mask. Disposable masks are not designed to fit tightly and wearing more than one will not improve fit. Wearing two cloth masks does not provide adequate protection.

\*\* A knotted and tucked medical procedure mask is created by bringing together the corners and ear loops on each side, knotting the ears loops together where they attach to the mask, and then tucking in and flattening the resulting extra mask material to minimize the side gaps. [Learn how to knot and tuck your mask to improve the fit.](#)

[Other options to improve fit](#) include wearing a mask fitter or wearing a nylon covering (like a gaiter) over a mask.

## How do I care for and reuse my mask?

### For cloth masks:

It is best to wash your mask after every use. It is especially important if the mask becomes visibly dirty or wet. It may be helpful to have multiple cloth masks so you have one to wear while another is being washed. Never wash disposable face masks.

### For KN95 masks and other disposable masks such as surgical masks and non-healthcare grade N95s:

- [CDC](#) recommends following the manufacturer's instructions on how to wear, store and properly dispose of the mask.
- Do not attempt to wash the mask. Washing will disrupt the fibers' ability to filter air.

- **To reuse a KN95 or other disposable mask:** In times of shortages, the [CDC](#) does provide guidance on limited reuse. To reuse, the mask should be carefully placed inside of a clean paper bag, with the date of first use on the paper bag, paying attention to not touch the contaminated front of the mask for storage. The time between uses should exceed the 72-hour expected survival time of SARS-CoV-2 virus (COVID virus).

### **When should I discard my KN95 or other disposable mask?**

- When the mask becomes dirty/soiled.
- When the mask becomes difficult to breathe through.
- When the mask no longer covers the nose and mouth.
- When the mask has stretched out or damaged ear loops which no longer allows a seal to the face.
- When the mask becomes wet.
- When the mask has holes or tears in the material.
- When the mask becomes difficult to breathe through.
- The masks may be discarded in the normal household trash.
- Clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water after mask removal.

### **Are there any precautions I should take with my mask?**

- Avoid touching your mask when wearing it or after taking it off. Take it off by the ear loops or ties. Clean your hands after you touch your mask.
- When you put your mask on and off, you will likely touch your face. Before putting on or taking off your mask, always wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Do not put a used mask in places where others can touch them or where germs trapped in your mask can touch other surfaces, such as countertops or tables.
- Do not throw your mask loose in a bag or backpack. Consider keeping a dedicated paper bag with you to store your mask if you must take it off outside your home.

## **Additional questions about wearing a mask**

### **Do I need to wear a mask when I am exercising?**

It is a good idea to wear a mask while exercising around others (indoors) if it does not interfere in the exercise, even when not required. Consider exercises that allow you to keep physical distance from others. Walking, running and biking outside are examples of activities that do not require shared equipment or close contact with others.

### **I was confirmed to have COVID-19 and am better, do I still need to wear a mask?**

Yes. Everyone, including those who are fully vaccinated, up to date and recently recovered from COVID-19 are recommended to wear well-fitting masks in all indoor public settings.

**Can I wear a clear face mask?**

Wearing a mask may make it difficult for some people to understand what others are saying because words are muffled and visual cues are blocked. This is worse with short or one-word statements because there isn't context. Some people rely on lip reading as a way to help understand what is being said.

Clear masks or cloth masks with a plastic panel can be used to aid in communication when interacting with the following groups:

- People who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Young children or students learning to read.
- Students learning a new language.
- People with disabilities.
- People who need to see the proper shape of the mouth for making appropriate vowel sounds (for example, when singing).

**Can I wear a face shield instead of a mask?**

Face shields, including plastic shields and hybrid products that have fabric around the edges of the shield, are not a replacement for a mask. For people who are medically unable to tolerate a mask, a face shield can be worn alone instead and may provide some protection. A face shield can also be worn over a mask for additional protection.

**Can I wear a mask with an exhalation valve or vent?**

It is not recommended to wear masks with exhalation valves or vents because respiratory droplets may be expelled through the outlet. This type face covering does not prevent the wearer from transmitting the virus to others.

**Can a business refuse service to visitors or customers who are not wearing a mask?**

Yes. Businesses open to the public may refuse entry to those who decline to wear a mask.

**Why are masks recommended in some settings?**

The use of masks is one more simple tool that may help reduce the spread of the virus – especially from people who are infected and don't know it yet. [Evidence](#), informs recommendations for wearing masks.