

Do Homemade Face Masks Help Protect the Public?

The CDC recommends **wearing cloth face coverings in public settings** where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to **slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others**. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

It is clear that cloth masks are far less protective to the wearer than **N-95 respirators**, which are **reserved for healthcare workers**. Homemade cloth masks are more similar to surgical masks but still fall short. A few studies suggest that cloth masks **may** offer the wearer a **little** protection.

Wearing a Cloth or Surgical Mask WILL:

- Keep you from touching your nose and mouth, preventing the spread of germs from your hands. (Remember not to touch your eyes either).
- Protect your nose and mouth from **large** infected respiratory droplets from other people's coughs or sneezes.
- Help keep others safe by limiting the transfer of infected respiratory droplets from your coughs and sneezes onto surfaces that others may touch.



Wearing a Cloth or Surgical Mask WILL NOT:

- Keep you from inhaling or spreading tiny infected aerosol particles that we all breathe out in the course of normal breathing.
- Allow you to disregard the 6-foot social distancing and stay-at-home guidelines.
- Keep you from potentially getting exposed to virus particles.



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