

Use of Cloth Face Mask to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

(Advisory on use of face mask)

It is learnt that a significant portion of individuals with corona virus lack symptoms (asymptomatic) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (pre-symptomatic) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this new evidence, Centre for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), Atlanta, USA recommends wearing cloth face mask 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.

The use of simple cloth face Masks is advised 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 mask fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Any used cotton cloth including old cotton vest or t-shirt can be used to make this mask. The colour of the mask does not matter. It must be ensured that the fabric is washed well in boiling water, containing 2% salt, for 5 min & dried well, before the mask is made.

How to Wear a Cloth Face Mask

Cloth face masks should

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

Cloth face masks should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

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

Use of masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. The mask must be used and disposed off properly.

Cleaning of reusable cloth mask:

They should be routinely washed in soap & warm water depending on the frequency of use.

A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a face mask.

The mask is to be dried under sun for at least 5 hours.

Alternatively the mask is to be boiled in pressure cooker for 10 min or in hot water with salt for 15 min.

As a third alternative the mask may be pressed under iron for 5 min. after washing.

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

Disposal of used masks

1. Used mask should be considered as potentially infected medical waste.

Hospital setting: It should be disposed off in the identified infectious waste disposal bag/ covered container with bleach solution (5%) or sodium hypochlorite solution (1%). Health facilities should adopt appropriate Bio-medical Waste Management practices for disposal of used masks.

Community settings: Where medical waste management protocol cannot be practiced, it may be stored in a covered container with bleach solution (5%) and then disposed off either by burning or deep burial.

1. **Triple layer mask should not be re-used :** Masks used by patients / care givers/ close contacts during home care should be kept in a covered bin after use with bleach solution (5%) or sodium hypochlorite solution (1%) or appropriate concentration of Quaternary Ammonium household disinfectant and then disposed off either by burning or deep burial.
2. **Reusable cloth facemask: Final Disposal :** Masks used by persons in community should be disinfected using ordinary bleach solution (5%) or sodium hypochlorite solution (1%) or appropriate concentration of Quaternary Ammonium household disinfectant and then disposed off either by burning or deep burial during final disposal.

How to Prepare Cloth Mask to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

Sewn Cloth Face Mask

Preparation

Materials

Two 10"x6" rectangles of cotton fabric

Two 6" pieces of elastic (or rubber bands, string, cloth strips, or hair ties)

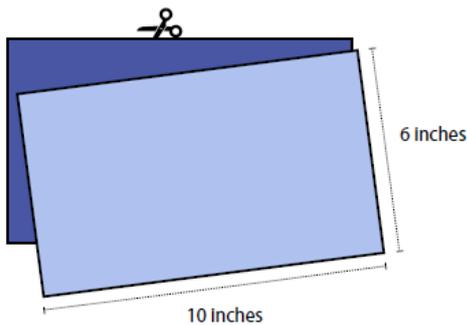
Needle and thread (or bobby pin)

Scissors

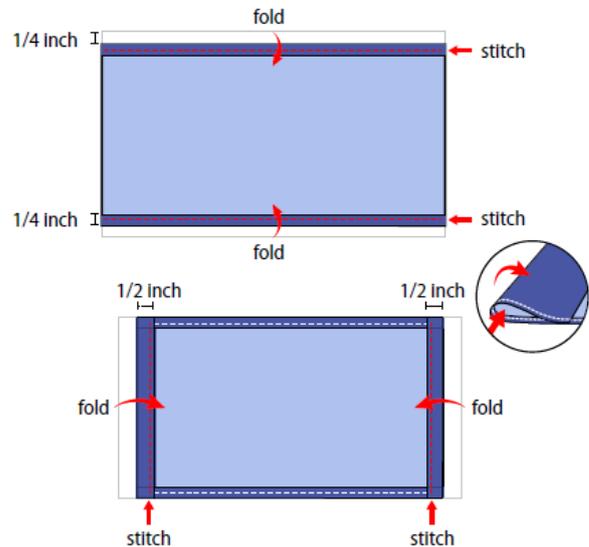
Sewing machine

Tutorial

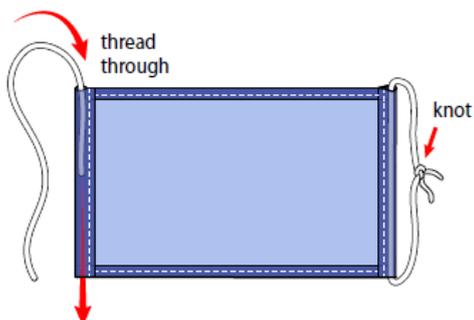
1. Cut out two 10-by-6-inch rectangles of cotton fabric. Use tightly woven cotton, such as quilting fabric or cotton sheets. T-shirt fabric will work in a pinch. Stack the two rectangles; you will sew the cloth face covering as if it was a single piece of fabric.



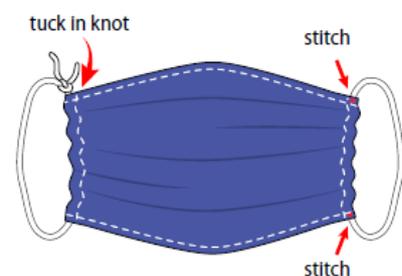
2. Fold over the long sides 1/4 inch and hem. Then fold the double layer of fabric over 1/2 inch along the short sides and stitch down.



3. Run a 6-inch length of 1/8-inch wide elastic through the wider hem on each side of the cloth face covering. These will be the ear loops. Use a large needle or a bobby pin to thread it through. Tie the ends tight. Don't have elastic? Use hair ties or elastic head bands. If you only have string, you can make the ties longer and tie the cloth face covering behind your head.

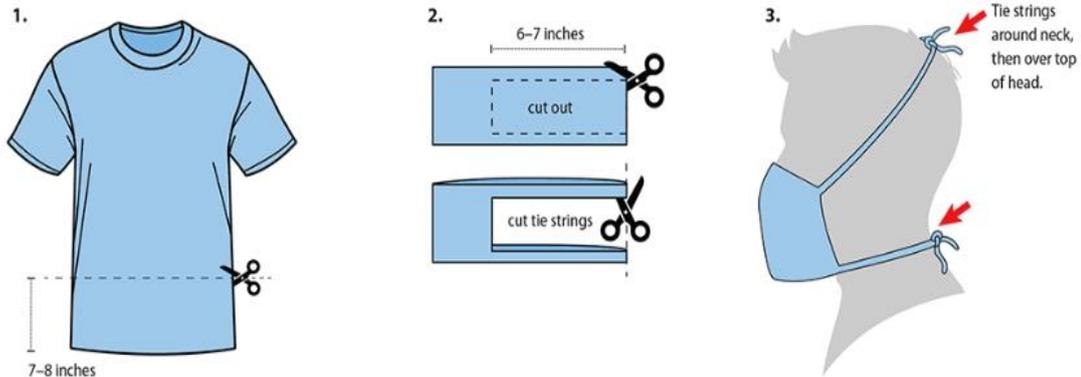


4. Gently pull on the elastic so that the knots are tucked inside the hem. Gather the sides of the cloth face covering on the elastic and adjust so the cloth face covering fits your face. Then securely stitch the elastic in place to keep it from slipping.



Quick Cut T-shirt Face Mask (no sew method)

Materials
T-shirt
Scissors
Tutorial



Bandanna Face Mask (no sew method)

Materials
Bandana (or square cotton cloth approximately 20"x20")
Coffee filter
Rubber bands (or hair ties)
Scissors (if you are cutting your own cloth)

