


# Masking Guidelines

## [CDC LINK: HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF](#)

**Medical masks** can be used to prevent the spread of respiratory infections.

There are 2 main types of medical masks: **face masks** and **N95 respirators**.



**Face mask**

**N95 respirator**

**Face masks** fit more loosely and prevent the wearer from spreading large sprays and droplets when coughing or sneezing.




**N95 respirators** fit more tightly and prevent the wearer from inhaling smaller, airborne infectious particles. **N95 respirators are not recommended for use by the general public.**

**Face masks should only be used by**

- ✓ Individuals with symptoms of respiratory infection such as coughing, sneezing, and sometimes fever
- ✓ Health care workers
- ✓ Persons taking care of or in close contact with someone with a respiratory infection

**How do I use a face mask?**

- 1 Wash hands for at least 20 seconds prior to putting on a face mask.
- 2 Place face mask over nose and mouth. Ensure a tight seal with no gaps and secure elastics or straps.
- 3 Avoid touching the front of the face mask. If you do, wash hands for at least 20 seconds.
- 4 Remove the face mask without touching the front. Discard in a closed bin.
- 5 Wash hands again for at least 20 seconds.



### ARE N95 MASKS REUSABLE?

Dr. Peter Tsai, M.D., the inventor of the filtration fabric in the N95 mask offers two methods.

#### N95 REUSE METHOD #1

- Leave a used respirator in dry, atmosphere air for 3-4 days to dry it out. Polypropylene in N95 masks is hydrophobic and contains zero moisture. COVID-19 needs a host to survive. When the respirator is dry in 3-4 days, the virus will not have survived.

#### N95 REUSE METHOD #2

- You can also sterilize the N95 mask by hanging it in the oven *without contacting metal* at 70C (158F) for 30 minutes.
- Use a wooden clip to hang the respirator in the oven.
- Keep N95 masks away from UV light and sunlight. N95 masks are degraded by UV light because it damages the electrostatic charges in the polypropylene material.

#### TIPS FOR BOTH METHODS

- DO NOT place the respirator on a metal surface, or too close to metal. The temperature on the metal surface is higher than the air temperature.
- Keep N95 masks away from UV light and sunlight.
- When removing the mask, hold the edge of the straps. Your hands may be contaminated at this time. Don't touch the inside part of the respirator. Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds afterward.

Coverage  
is key.

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#### When to Mask:

All **healthcare workers** should use surgical masks in high-risk patient environments.

If a **patient** is suspected of COVID-19, the patient should be masked in a surgical mask as well.

**General population** does not need to mask unless they are in public settings, such as a grocery store. N95 masks are not for public use. Surgical masks work well for the public.