



5 Steps to Mask Safety

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Safe Use of a Face Masks requires the following 5 Simple Steps;

1. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer. **NOTE:** Hand sanitizer does not replace proper hand washing.



2. Thoroughly look over the mask and be sure that it is clean and free of any rips, tears or holes. Also, make sure you are putting the correct side of the mask against your face and that it is not upside down.

3. There are 3 common types of masks being used and each one is put on your face differently. In each case avoid touching the mask surface as much as possible while putting it on. These types of masks are:

- Masks with loops: Grasp the ear loops only and place around each ear.
- Masks with ties: Grasp the ties only. Bring the mask to nose level. Secure the mask to your face with a bow knot on the back of the head.
- Masks with straps: Grasp the straps and pull over your head and secure it comfortably. Many masks with straps have adjustments for comfort.

ALL masks should cover BOTH your face and nose. There should be no gaps between the mask and your face.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You should not touch your mask while wearing it. If you do touch the mask, you should immediately wash your hands or apply hand sanitizer and then change your gloves.



4. Taking your mask off properly is very important. Always wash your hands before removing the mask and avoid touching the front side of the mask. Follow these simple guidelines for safety:

- Masks with loops: Grasp both ear loops at the same time and gently remove mask from your face.
- Masks with ties: Untie the bow knots beginning with the bottom then untie the top bow and gently pull the mask away from your face.
- Masks with straps: These masks may be unique in how each one is removed. Commonly these masks would recommend that you first loosen and remove the bottom strap, then loosen the top strap and remove the mask from your face.

5. Properly taking care of the mask and where possible cleaning it are also important in maintain your health and safety. Follow these steps:

- Washable fabric masks should be cleaned with soap and hot water immediately after each use.
- Replace single-use masks if they become dirty, damp, wet or hard to breathe through. These “single use” masks should not be reused.

NOTE: This information is presented as a best practice for using face masks in a child nutrition operation and in no way replaces any official guidance from regulatory agencies.