



Guidance on Covering Nose and Mouth

A significant percentage of individuals with the COVID-19 virus lack symptoms. Because an infected person can transmit the virus to others before showing any symptoms, the covering of a person's nose and mouth when visiting an Essential Business or Public Location is necessary to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. This is consistent with the findings of the CDC and Fort Bend County Health Authority. Wearing a face covering is not a substitute for maintaining 6-foot social distancing and hand washing, as these remain important steps to slowing the spread of the virus. Staying home is the best way to help reduce the spread of the virus, but if an individual must leave their place of residence to visit an Essential Business, wearing a fabric facemask should be used to save lives as outlined below:

The face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators, which are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and first responders.

The public in general and Essential Business employees are advised as follows:

A. To the greatest extent possible, all persons over the age of two (2) wear some form of covering over their nose and mouth, such as a homemade mask, scarf, bandana or handkerchief, when:

- 1) patronizing an Essential Business; and
- 2) using public transportation, taxis, or ride shares.

B. This guidance does not apply to persons that are:

- 1) riding in a personal vehicle;
- 2) engaging in outdoor activity;
- 3) eating; or
- 4) when wearing a covering poses a greater mental or physical health, safety or security risk such as anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.

Children under the age of two (including infants) should not wear cloth face coverings.

Those between the ages of two and nine should wear cloth face coverings under adult supervision to ensure that the child can breathe safely and avoid choking or suffocation.

Children with breathing problems should not wear a face covering.

Parents and Guardians of children under 10 shall be responsible for appropriately masking children.

All COVID-19 Suspected Positives, those currently being tested, and untested individuals with cough and/or fever, and household members of same category of individuals shall not leave their residence without a mask or cloth face covering to prevent the spread to others.

To the greatest extent possible, all individuals working for an Essential Business are advised to wear a mask or cloth face covering whenever in public and whenever performing job duties in the presence of others.

To the greatest extent possible, employers shall provide employees with a mask or face covering.

An owner or operator of an Essential Business may refuse admission or service to any individual who fails to wear face covering.

Medical grade (N95) and surgical masks should be reserved and used only by medical professionals and first responders.

Cloth face coverings are not intended for use by healthcare workers, first responders, and others whose work requires close contact with people who are ill.

Cloth coverings should be made in accordance with CDC Guidance, which can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

AAP guidance for Parents of young children can be found here:

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/masks-and-children-during-covid-19/>