

Mandatory Face Mask Policy at UC Davis Health

Updated Nov. 20, 2020

This document summarizes our policy with face masks to ensure consistency with Executive Orders from the Governor and CDPH Guidelines updated on November 16, 2020

- Face coverings must be worn state-side at all times when outside of the home, unless one or more to the exceptions outlined below apply. It does not substitute for existing guidance about physical distancing and hand hygiene.
- **Individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings in the following specific settings:**
 - If you are in a car alone or solely with a member of your own household
 - Persons working in an office or room alone, with the door closed.
 - Persons who are actively eating or drinking provided that they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet away from other persons who are not members of the same household or residence.
 - Persons who are outdoors **and** maintaining at least 6 feet of social distancing from others not in their household. A face covering must be worn if within 6 feet of others not in their household.
 - Workers who are required to wear respiratory protection.
- This means that when at work indoors, in a clinical or non-clinical area, you must always wear a facemask, unless:
 - You are **alone** in an office
 - You are sitting alone, more than 6 feet from any other person, and actively eating or drinking
- Staff working in cubicles or shared workspaces must wear facemasks at all times with the exceptions listed above.
- If you are in a clinical or patient care area, the PPE guidelines for that area apply.
- If you are outdoors, the state's and/or county's regulations apply. In short, they state persons must always maintain a 6-foot separation or a mask should be worn. More from CDPH is available [here](#).

Background and Evidence:

UC Davis Health has implemented a mandatory policy to use face coverings in all public settings, including outdoor spaces and shared indoor spaces, based upon CDPH [guidance](#).

On November 16, 2020, CDPH issues new guidance that supersedes the face covering guidance issued on June 18, 2020. The risk for COVID-19 exposure and infection remains and will continue to be in our midst for the foreseeable next several months.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have learned a lot about COVID-19 transmission, most notably that there are a large proportion of people who are infected but are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic, and they play an important part in community spread. The use of face coverings by everyone can limit the release of infected droplets when talking, coughing, sneezing, singing, exercising, shouting, or other forms of increased respiration, and they can also reinforce physical distancing by signaling the need to remain apart. In addition, [increasing evidence also demonstrates a cloth face covering or mask also offers some protection to the wearer](#), too.

Additionally, [research published](#) in Health Affairs estimates between 230,000–450,000 cases of COVID-19 may have been prevented by face mask usage and that, “requiring use of face masks in public might help in reducing COVID-19 spread.” Plus, a team of scientists that included UC San Diego experts [analyzed the transmission pathways](#) of COVID-19. Their study confirmed that face coverings determine the pandemic’s trends and significantly reduce the number of infections.

Face covering use in common spaces on the UC Davis Sacramento Campus has become lax as many people are removing masks from one ear to talk, or sitting in groups to talk or eat, resulting in increased person-to-person transmission. As a healthcare enterprise we are charged with improving the health of the population, thus we should be setting an example to the communities we serve.

It is important to note that face coverings are supplemental to, and *not* a replacement for, appropriate physical distancing or staying at home if you have any symptoms or are feeling sick. If infected, the face coverings decrease your chance of transmitting the virus to others and wearing a mask decreases your likelihood of ingesting droplets from others — decreasing your own risk of infection.

Face coverings should be worn in an appropriate manner to increase their efficacy (See CDC guidelines for [How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings](#)). To wear a face mask correctly:

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily

Masks should not be taken off for talking, or listening, and only should be removed when in a room alone, outdoors and far away from other people. More information about correct masking wearing is available in [this UC Davis Health poster](#).