



## Ford County Public Health Department

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For Immediate Release

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### **Wearing Cloth Face Covering in Public Settings Now Recommended**

On April 3, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced a new recommendation to help slow the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). While health experts are still studying the spread and effects of COVID-19, the CDC reports new evidence from recent studies show “A significant portion of individuals with coronavirus 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.”

#### **When should I wear a face covering?**

All Illinoisans should wear a mask or face covering when they must leave their home or report to work for essential operations and they either cannot or it is impractical to maintain 6 feet of physical distance between themselves and others. Examples include:

- Shopping at essential businesses, like grocery stores or pharmacies,
- Picking up food from the drive thru or curbside pickup,
- While visiting your health care provider,
- Traveling on public transportation,
- Interacting with customers, clients, or coworkers at essential businesses,
- Performing essential services for state and local government agencies, such as laboratory testing, where close interactions with other people are unavoidable, and
- When feeling sick, coughing, or sneezing.

#### **Who should wear a face covering?**

All individuals are advised to wear face coverings in public, except children younger than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.

#### **How do I make my own mask or face covering?**

Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used. The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those types of masks should continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

### **How should I wear a cloth face covering?**

Cloth face coverings 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

### **How do I clean my cloth face covering?**

It's a good idea to wash your mask or face covering at least daily. Place your used masks in a bag or bin away from small children or pets until they can be laundered with detergent and dried on a hot cycle. If you need to remove and reuse your mask before washing, consider putting it in a plastic or paper bag (not your backpack or purse) and be mindful not to put the mask where others can touch it or where the mask will contaminate other, shared surfaces. Wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face.

FCPHD wants to remind all that the use of a face covering is an extra step in the prevention of getting or spreading COVID-19. FCPHD encourages individuals to continue all preventative steps to lessen the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Please continue to maintain social distancing, wash your hands often, avoid touching your face, and only leave home for essential tasks. For more information about the use of a cloth facemask and how to make your own mask, visit the CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), or search for the U.S. Surgeon General's video on how to make your own face covering. You may also visit the COVID-19 page on FCPHD's website ([www.fordcountyphd.org](http://www.fordcountyphd.org)) for additional resources on how to make your own face mask/covering.