Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Improve How Your Mask Protects You

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Correct and consistent mask use is a critical step everyone can take to prevent getting and spreading COVID-19. Masks work best when everyone wears them, but not all masks provide the same protection. When choosing a mask, look at how well it fits, how well it filters the air, and how many layers it has.

Two important ways to make sure your mask works the best it can

1. **Make sure your mask fits snugly against your face.** Gaps can let air with respiratory droplets leak in and out around the edges of the mask

2. **Pick a mask with layers to keep your respiratory droplets in and others' out.** A mask with layers will stop more respiratory droplets getting inside your mask or escaping from your mask if you are sick.

For more information on science behind improving how your mask protects you, see Improve the Fit and Filtration of Your Mask to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19.

For more information on wearing a mask and personal protective equipment in healthcare workplaces, see Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic.

Do

Choose a mask with a **Nose Wire**

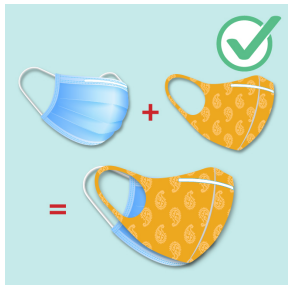
- A nose wire is a metal strip along the top of the mask
- Nose wires prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask.
- Bend the nose wire over your nose to fit close to your face.

Use a **Mask Fitter or Brace**

- Use a mask fitter or brace over a disposable mask or a cloth mask to prevent air from leaking around the edges of the mask.

Check that it **Fits Snugly** over your nose, mouth, and chin

- Check for gaps by cupping your hands around the outside edges of the mask.
- Make sure no air is flowing from the area near your eyes or from the sides of the mask.
- If the mask has a good fit, you will feel warm air come through the front of the mask and may be able to see the mask material move in and out with each breath.



Add **Layers** of material

2 ways to layer

- Use a cloth mask that has multiple layers of fabric.
- Wear one disposable mask underneath a cloth mask.
  - The second mask should push the edges of the inner mask against your face.

Make sure you can see and breathe easily

Knot and Tuck ear loops of a 3-ply mask

- Knot the ear loops of a 3-ply face mask where they join the edge of the mask
- Fold and tuck the unneeded material under the edges
- For video instructions, see: https://youtu.be/UANi8Cc71A0 .

Do NOT

Combine two disposable masks

- Disposable masks are not designed to fit tightly and wearing more than one will not improve fit.

Combine a KN95 mask with any other mask.

- Only use one KN95 mask at a time.

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