



April 4, 2020

Oregon Guidance on Use of Homemade Masks or Face Coverings by the Public to Prevent Spread of COVID-19: April 4, 2020

Preventing transmission of the COVID-19 virus depends on physical distancing, frequently washing hands and surfaces, and staying home when you are sick. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (e.g. masks, gowns and gloves) protects healthcare personnel who are taking care of patients with COVID-19. A shortage of PPE has prompted many in the public to offer to make face coverings for healthcare personnel. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released recommendations April 3, 2020, regarding cloth face coverings for the general public. Below are Oregon Health Authority's recommendations.

Healthcare Settings

Homemade masks are not known to be effective in protecting the wearer against infection. Therefore, OHA does **NOT** recommend that healthcare personnel wear these masks when taking care of sick patients. However, if worn by a sick person, particularly with respiratory symptoms such as coughing or sneezing, they could reduce the spread of the virus.

Public Settings

The most effective strategies to prevent infection include the physical distancing measures mandated by the Governor's Executive Orders, along with basic hand hygiene and cough etiquette. Following CDC recommendations,¹ OHA recognizes that use of cloth face coverings may reduce the spread of virus and help prevent those who have the virus but do not have symptoms from passing it to others. Nonetheless, face coverings do NOT change the need to:

- Avoid all social and recreational activities in which a distance of 6 feet between individuals cannot be maintained;
- Maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others during any necessary trips to grocery stores, pharmacies, or healthcare entities;
- Cover one's cough or sneeze with a tissue and discard it immediately; or cough or sneeze into one's upper sleeve rather than into one's hands;
- Avoid touching one's eyes, nose, mouth, or face;
- Clean your hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if handwashing is not possible; and
- If sick, isolate oneself and stay away from work, family, and friends until 72 hours after both fever and cough have resolved, without the use of fever-reducing medication.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>