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Guidance on Cloth Face Coverings

The CDC and the New Mexico Department of Health recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

Cloth face coverings should not be used as a substitute for social distancing, but rather can be used as a supplement.

The CDC continues to study the spread and effects of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in proximity, even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms.

Wearing a cloth face covering also helps prevent the wearer from touching his or her mouth or nose.

The best defense against COVID-19 is still frequent hand washing, avoiding touching our eyes, nose and mouth, and social distancing by staying at home.

Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when around others in public i.e. the grocery store, pharmacy, health clinic and/or traveling on public transportation.

- The cloth face covering is meant to protect other people in case you are infected—because you may not know if you have the virus (unless you've been tested), it's advisable that *everyone* uses a face covering.
- Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.
  - The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers.
  - Instead, make your own cloth face covering or purchase one online.
- Cloth face coverings *should not* be placed on young children who are unable to remove the face covering without assistance, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

What is a cloth face covering?

- A cloth face covering is fabric that covers the nose and mouth. It can be:
  - A sewn mask secured with ties or straps around the head or behind the ears
  - A piece of fabric tied around a person's head.
  - Factory-made or made from household items such as scarfs, T-shirts or towels.
  - Here's a list of commonly available cloth materials that are believed to be most effective:
    - High thread count cotton pillowcases or sheets
    - Quilting fabric
    - T-shirts
  - Note: bandanas are not considered to be as effective as other materials

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How do I properly put on and take of a cloth face covering?

- Before putting on a cloth face covering clean your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Cover your mouth and nose with cloth face covering
  - Make sure there are no gaps between your face and the cloth face covering. It should fit snugly.
- Avoid touching the cloth face covering while using it
  - If you do touch the face covering wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer

- To remove the cloth face covering
  - Remove it from behind, <u>do not</u> touch the front of cloth face covering
  - Discard immediately in a closed bin, to later be washed or discarded
  - Immediately clean your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer

How do I take care of my cloth face covering?

- Cloth face coverings should be washed regularly, if possible after every use
  - Your washing machine at home should suffice in properly washing a cloth face covering
  - Wash with detergent in hot water and dry on a hot cycle.
- If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face.
- Cloth face coverings should not be worn damp or wet from spit or mucus
- Replace the cloth face covering with a new one if:
  - No longer fully covering the nose and mouth
  - Has damaged ties or straps
  - Has holes or tears in the fabric

Cloth face covering tutorials and resources
- CDC How to Make Your own Face Covering - https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4
- How to Sew a Face Mask - https://www.nytimes.com/article/how-to-make-face-mask-coronavirus.html
- Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19 https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html