# Coronavirus Face Masks: Types & When to Use | Johns Hopkins Medicine

# Coronavirus Face Masks & Protection FAQs

[Infectious Diseases](#)

Reviewed By:



[Lisa Lockerd Maragakis, M.D., M.P.H.](#)

New information is emerging every day on how the new coronavirus spreads and the best ways to protect against COVID-19. The most effective protections include washing your hands frequently with soap and water and practicing [social and physical distancing](#). However, wearing cloth face masks or coverings in public when social distancing can't be observed does offer protection against spread of COVID-19.

[Lisa Maragakis, M.D., M.P.H.,](#) an expert in infection prevention, provides guidance based on Johns Hopkins Medicine policy.

## Should I wear a face mask or covering for coronavirus protection?

The answer depends on who and where you are. At Johns Hopkins, a team of experts in infection prevention, emergency medicine and emergency management is always reviewing the best ways to protect our patients, our staff and the general public. These are our current recommendations.

## Masks for the Public

**The general public:** The virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity — for example via speaking, coughing, or sneezing — even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this evidence, wearing a cloth face mask or covering in public places where social distancing can't be observed will help reduce spread of the disease. For example, in a grocery store or on a bus, if you wear a face mask, you help protect those around you in case you cough or sneeze.

Federal and state agencies also provide specific recommendations: