

Presently, [King County requires that people wear cloth face coverings](#) when entering public spaces where social distancing may be difficult to maintain. Washington State requires that a cloth coverings be worn over the nose and mouth at-all-times while on campus by all employees, students, and visitors. People should know that a cloth face covering is not considered personal protective equipment (PPE) but it is an infection control device; It is source-control, utilized for the consideration that asymptomatic carriers may spread the virus without knowing they have been infected. Face coverings reduce the opportunity for infectious germs to spread from the individual wearing the covering to people within close proximity to that individual. The use of cloth face coverings are not a replacement for social distancing strategies and should be incorporated in combination with physical-distancing (of 6-feet or more), frequent hand-washing, and staying home when symptomatic.

Individuals considering to wear a face mask of any type should be aware:

- Wearing a mask can increase the burden on the body to breath and potentially increase frequency of touching the face or (for those who are aware) it can serve as a reminder not to touch the face – always wash your hands before and after touching the face covering
- Neither the homemade or n95/medical masks are a fail-safe protection to prevent the person wearing the mask from getting sick and they should be reserved for healthcare staff working directly with confirmed or suspected patients with COVID-19

Caring for Your Cloth Face Covering

1. Wash your cloth face coverings regularly, preferably after each use, or at least daily.
2. Launder cloth face coverings in a washing machine with detergent and hot water, to avoid bacteria build-up. Alternatively:
 - Boiling: Place the face covering in a pan of boiling water with detergent, swirl the cloth in the water with a clean spoon or tongs for several minutes
 - Hand washing: lather the face covering with detergent and scrub it for at least 20 seconds with hot water, like when washing your hands
 - DO NOT microwave your face mask nor spray it with alcohol or chemical disinfect

3. Dry your cloth face coverings in a clothes dryer on the high heat cycle. Alternatively:
 - Dry the face covering with a hot iron and a heat setting suitable to the fabric (cotton, silk, chiffon, flannel)
 - Dry the face mask with a hair dryer, use the hottest heat setting
4. Wash your hands before and after handling your cloth face coverings.
5. **To store your face covering**, fold the mask in half (lengthwise or widthwise), so the outside surfaces are touching each other. Place it carefully into your clean storage area in a paper bag. Seal the bag, if you are using a paper bag; if using a plastic bag, leave it open for air circulation.
6. To reapply the face covering, wash your hands, then open the mask storage bag.
7. Use the ear loops/ties to put the face covering on and tuck it under your chin. Secure it to your face at the bridge of your nose until comfortable and well covered. Wash your hands.

Notes

- If you must re-wear your cloth face coverings before washing, wash your hands immediately after putting your cloth face coverings back on and avoid touching your face
- To create a no-sew cloth face covering, follow the [Surgeon General's guidance](#) or follow the directions for both a no-sew and sewn option provided by the [CDC](#). See also, the [World Health Organization's \(WHO\) guidance on face coverings](#)
- In the public setting, face coverings are optional when indoors and others are not present, or physical-distancing can be maintained
- In some cases face coverings should not be worn: See King County's directive: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/care/masks.aspx>
- Discard cloth face coverings that: no longer cover the nose and mouth, have stretched out or have damaged ties or straps, cannot stay on your face, have holes or tears in the fabric, have been worn for aerosol generating activities, or have been exposed to human blood or body fluid

This is an adaptation of the *Quick Guide-Cloth Face Coverings* developed by Seattle University (Draft 2020-Revision 2)

- Take a few minutes to view the following video on [how to proper put-on and take-off gloves and face masks](#) so to prevent the opportunity of self-contamination during that procedure: <https://youtu.be/eVJbenwzR1s> (email healthandsafety@seattlecolleges.edu to request a translated transcript)

Thank you for taking these community health efforts, so we all can remain healthy and safe.

Resources

- Surgeon General, Dr. Jerome Adams - How to make your own cloth face covering from items you can find around the house: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPx1yqvJgf4>
- Washington State Department of Health: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/ClothFacemasks.pdf>
- CDC - DIY Cloth Face Covers: <http://tiny.cc/cdc-diy-face-cover>
- Article-Aerosol Filtration Efficiency of Common Fabrics Used in Cloth Masks: <https://pubs.acs.org/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1021/acsnano.0c03252&ref=pdf>