



TOWN OF MARBLEHEAD

Board of Health

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Marblehead, MA 01945

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Guidance for Residents on Wearing Face Coverings During Covid-19

April 30, 2020

The Town of Marblehead, following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recommends that Marblehead residents wear face masks or cloth face coverings whenever they go outside or enter a public setting where other physical (social) distancing measures are difficult to maintain, such as in supermarkets, convenience stores, and pharmacies.

It is important to note that a face mask is not a substitute for physical distancing and regular hand washing, which remain among the most effective ways to slow the spread of COVID-19. The single most effective way to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 is to stay home.

Wearing a face covering may help people who are asymptomatic (that is, they may have the virus yet don't show any symptoms) from transmitting COVID-19 to others. A face covering is not intended to protect the wearer from getting sick.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for health care workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Why should I wear a face mask or covering?

In light of new data that suggests that COVID-19 [may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms](#), the Town of Marblehead recommends that you wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth in public and community settings. This is to protect people around you if you are infected with COVID-19 but do not have symptoms.

It is vitally important to remember that a face covering does not replace frequent handwashing, avoiding touching the face, staying 6 feet from others when outside, and staying away from people who are ill. **These are the most important and effective steps you can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19.**

Who should wear a face mask or covering?

- **Anyone who needs to be outside** is strongly encouraged to wear a face covering. This includes making a trip to the grocery store or pharmacy, taking a walk, or going to the doctor.
- People who are sick should also wear a face covering while inside if they cannot stay 6 feet apart from others in their home. People who are sick should stay home, but if they need to leave home, such as to get urgent medical care, they should always wear a face covering.

Who should NOT wear a face mask or covering?

- Children age 2 or younger.
- Anyone who has trouble breathing.
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.



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How do I properly wear a cloth face covering or mask?

- All face coverings should:
- Fit snugly but comfortably against the sides of the face.
- Be secured with ties or ear loops.
- Include multiple layers of fabric, if it is a cloth covering.
- Allow for breathing without restriction.

Do I need to wear my face mask or covering the entire time I am outside?

Yes. Anyone who needs to be outside of their home, even for a brief period of time, is strongly encouraged to wear a face covering and to continue practicing physical (social) distancing.

It is important that you not take off your face covering while outside. If you need to take off your face mask, make sure to keep it close by so that you can put it back on quickly and properly should you come into close contact with another person.

To take off your covering, grab the strings or loops, being very careful not to touch the front of the covering nor your eyes, nose or mouth.

Should I wear a face mask or covering while I exercise?

Yes. The Marblehead Health Department strongly encourages everyone to wear a face covering when they go outside, even to exercise. If you are exercising and need to remove your face covering to breathe adequately, make sure no one is near you before removing it. Keep the face covering readily available so you can put it back on quickly and properly if someone comes within 6 feet of you.

It's also important for you to stay at least 6 feet away from others while you are exercising outside. Only engage in types of exercise that allow you to keep a 6-foot physical distance from others and that don't require shared equipment or close contact with others.

What precautions do I need to take when removing my face mask or covering?

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water every time you put on and take off the face covering. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when you remove the face covering.
- Do not put a used face covering in places where others can touch them or where germs trapped in your face covering can touch other surfaces, such as counter tops or a kitchen table.
- Do not throw your face covering loose in a bag or backpack. Keep a paper or plastic bag with you to store your face covering if you will be taking it off when outside.

Is it possible for me to make my own face covering?

Yes. A face covering can be a scarf, bandana or other cloth. For directions on how to make a cloth face covering at home, visit the Centers for Disease Control website.



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There is no clear consensus on the most effective material to use as a face covering, but tightly woven cotton or other cloth seems to be the best choice. The CDC recommends two layers of tightly woven cotton fabric with a high thread count. It is important that you can breathe comfortably through your nose while wearing the face covering.

The CDC website has a few patterns, including one that involves a coffee filter and another that requires no sewing — just scissors and the willingness to sacrifice a T-shirt. Surgeon General Jerome Adams released a video of himself making a mask out of cloth and rubber bands.

Important reminder: The face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are crucial supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders to care for the most critically ill. Health care workers and first responders cannot keep distance from others, avoid sick people, or avoid contact with others' bodily fluid, such as respiratory secretion and saliva, so it is essential that we reserve masks for them.

How often should I wash my face mask or covering?

It is recommended that you wash your face covering once a day by hand or machine using detergent. The face covering should be fully dry before using it again.