



GUIDANCE FOR REOPENING OF SCHOOLS:

American Academy of Pediatrics: [COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry](#)

Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

MASK/FACE COVERING RELATED RESOURCES:

CDC advice on masking: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics - HealthChildren.org advice on masking related to children and adolescents: <https://healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Cloth-Face-Coverings-for-Children-During-COVID-19.aspx>

Video for children on how and why to wear facemask (created by Melissa St. Germain, MD, board certified pediatrician and president of the Nebraska Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Srig59LN6ik>

3 common mask myths debunked (UNMC/Nebraska Medical Center) <https://www.nebraskamed.com/COVID/3-common-mask-myths-debunked-by-an-infectious-diseases-expert>

Myth 1: Masks are harmful to your health (False)

The facts: There are many concerns that wearing masks may be harmful to your health, but this is not based in fact. The masks we recommend are basic procedure or fabric masks. These masks are not tight fitting and allow airflow, while still protecting others from respiratory droplets. **Just as oxygen can get in, carbon dioxide can get out. So accumulation of carbon dioxide is not a direct concern.** Although these masks are new to most in our community, they are common in the health care setting. Because of this, we have years of experience with them, and are certain they are safe to wear.

Myth 2: Masks only help if someone has symptoms (False)

The facts: Coughing and sneezing do create very high-risk situations, but talking, yelling, exercising and singing can also spread infected respiratory droplets. Any time inhaling and exhaling occur, there is potential to spread the virus. Because of this, we continue to encourage people to wear masks.

Masks help us prevent infection in several ways:

- You may have COVID-19 without knowing. We know it's possible for people to carry the virus without having symptoms. By wearing a mask, you can prevent accidental spread
- Wearing a mask also helps protect you by preventing infection. If someone else is not masked and spreads infected droplets into the air, the mask serves as a barrier that limits the likelihood that you will breathe in those droplets and become infected
- Touching your face with unwashed hands (or even gloves), could get the live virus in your eyes, mouth or nose. Depending on the amount of virus on your hands, this can cause infection. Masks provide a barrier to at least the mouth and nose

Myth 3: Masks cause self-contamination (True and false)

The facts: In truth, this is a both myth and fact. Here's why: Masks can become contaminated on the outside surface, from the droplets mentioned above. If you do not handle your mask safely, and use great hand hygiene before and after touching it, you could contaminate yourself by getting virus off the mask, onto your hands, and into your eyes, nose or mouth. This is why washing cloth masks or replacing disposable masks is so important. **However, the idea that wearing a mask after you've been exposed to COVID-19 will increase your level of infection, is a myth.** There is no evidence to support this self-contamination claim.

5 Questions: Stanford scientists on COVID-19 mask guidelines (6/19/2020)

<http://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2020/06/stanford-scientists-contribute-to-who-mask-guidelines.html>

Larry Chu, MD, a professor of anesthesia and director of the AIM Laboratory &

Amy Price, PhD, a senior research scientist at Stanford's Anesthesia Informatics and Media Laboratory

1. How do cloth face coverings prevent the spread of COVID-19?

Chu: In order to answer this, it's first important to understand the concept of source control. We've learned that as many as 40% of people infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 may have no symptoms. But when they talk, cough or sneeze, they can still spread the virus to others in the form of respiratory droplets expelled into the air. Those droplets evaporate into fine particles that may linger. **The mask traps these larger droplets before they can evaporate.** So, wearing a mask regularly can prevent spreading at the source even when we don't know we are sick. But masks are just one important way to prevent this disease from spreading. Washing your hands regularly and thoroughly and keeping at least 6 feet apart from one another are still vitally important.

Price: Many people argue that cloth masks can't be effective because they can't filter out viral particles, which are extremely tiny. But, as Larry explained, most of these particles leave the mouth and nose in much larger droplets that become smaller through evaporation as they move away from the body. **Trapping droplets with the mask means not nearly as many viral particles escape.** So, when all parties in a gathering are wearing well-constructed, well-fitting masks, it provides an extra layer of safety for everyone. If two people are wearing masks, the viral particles can travel about 5 feet away from each individual. When an infected person is not wearing a mask, those particles can float through the air 30 feet or more and stay alive for up to 30 hours.

2. How do you respond to people who feel that wearing a mask can be harmful?

Price: I've heard so many misconceptions about cloth masks. **Some people think that if you wear a mask for long periods of time you will trap and breathe in excess amounts of carbon**

dioxide, which could lead to brain damage. That's just not true. A properly constructed mask provides more than enough ventilation. In fact, one way to test if your mask is well made is to try to blow out a candle through the mask from about 1 foot away. If you can't do so, your mask might be too tightly woven. **Other people feel that wearing a mask encourages people to touch their face and to loosen their adherence to other safety precautions like social distancing and hand washing. We've found the opposite. Wearing a mask reminds people to continue to be cautious. With a mask on, you actually touch your face less.** People who experience skin irritation should ensure their mask has a layer of wicking fabric, like cotton, against the face, and everyone should change the mask if it becomes wet or dirty. **Finally, it is been suggested that mask-wearing may increase the concentration of viral particles around an infected person's mouth and could increase the severity of the illness. While it is true that some studies of health care workers have suggested that the viral dose is an important determinant of infection, it's different for someone who is already infected. If you are sick, you already have the virus in your lungs; it is not going to get any worse.**

CDC:

- **Covid Resources:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- **use of cloth face covering information:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- **Consideration for schools:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>
- **Evidence for Effectiveness of Cloth Face Coverings:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

Cloth face coverings are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the cloth face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. This is called source control. This recommendation is based on what we know about the role respiratory droplets play in the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, paired with emerging evidence from clinical and laboratory studies that shows **cloth face coverings reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth.** COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), so the use of cloth face coverings is particularly important in settings where people are close to each other or where social distancing is difficult to maintain.

World Health Organization (WHO)

- **when and how to use masks:** <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>
- **Myth Busters section:** <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

Questions or need additional resources?

Email Nebraska Chapter AAP at director@nebraska-aap.org