

MASK BASICS -- It is important to understand the basics of masks to best protect yourself.

1. Masks protect the wearer even when others around them are not wearing masks.
2. Masks are only effective if they fit close to the face (without gaps) and cover the nose and mouth. Remember to keep nose and mouth covered. A nose wire or clip in the mask ensures a close fit.
3. Mask effectiveness, from least to best:
 - a. Single layer cloth mask
 - b. Double layer cloth mask
 - c. Double layer cloth mask with a filter inserted (to purchase online, search “Filters for cloth face masks”)
 - d. Single surgical mask
 - e. Surgical mask under cloth mask
 - f. KN95 mask
 - g. N95 masks
4. The “knot and tuck” method pictured in the center below improves the protection of a surgical mask.
5. Men with beard should use a mask fitter or brace (pictured third from right, below) and/or a surgical mask covered by a cloth mask to enhance fit.
6. In indoor places with more people passing through, and more enclosed spaces use higher efficiency masks and combinations of masks to give you the best possible protection.
7. The Omicron variant in particular readily infects the upper airways, making covering the nose as well as the mouth important.
8. When removing the mask, remember that there are viral particles on the outside of the mask, so remove with the mask by the strings, avoid touching the outside of the mask, avoid touching your nose, eyes and mouth **and use hand sanitizer or wash your hands as soon as possible.**
9. When a mask begins to show signs of wear – elastic strings no longer hold it tight to the face, it becomes wet (as after exercising), shows sign of wear and becoming dirty, replace.
10. Keep masks on hand so they are readily available when you need them.
11. **Face masks for children:** [St. Jude Children's Research Hospital](#) recommends children wear the white, “duck-bill N95 masks” because cloth masks do not provide the same level of protection and should not be used." The white duck-bill N-95 mask, shaped like a duck’s bill, comes in two sizes, small and regular. The design was created to offer more breathability.



For the CDC Guide to Masks, click here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>