

WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold. The risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age, with older adults at highest risk.

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. The best way to protect yourself and to help reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 is to limit your interactions with other people as much as possible and take precautions to prevent getting COVID-19 when you do interact with others. Those steps include wearing a face covering, maintaining social distance of 6 feet and washing your hands frequently. If you start feeling sick and think you may have COVID-19, get in touch with your healthcare provider within 24 hours.

CLOTH MASKS AND OTHER NON-MEDICAL FACE COVERINGS

Gov. Eric J. Holcomb's Executive Order [20-37](#) requires that all Hoosiers ages 8 and older (recommended for anyone older than 2 and younger than 8) wear face coverings in most public settings effective July 27. The order also lists exemptions. **The only exception is children younger than 2 years of age; they should not have face coverings, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).**

A mask or other face covering may be factory-made, sewn by hand, or improvised from household items such as scarves, bandanas and T-shirts. The mouth and nose should be covered.

The executive order requires face coverings for anyone 8 years old or older in the following places:

- Public indoor spaces and commercial entities
- While using public transportation or other vehicle services such as a taxi or ride share
- Outdoor public spaces when it's not possible to socially distance from people not in the same household

Additionally, face coverings will be required in schools for students in the third grade and above, as well as faculty, staff, volunteers and anyone else in schools. Mask are also required for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, with exceptions for strenuous physical activity. Exceptions to the face covering requirement include medical purposes, disabilities, exercising and eating and drinking. Individuals who cannot wear a mask for health reasons should consider alternatives, such as face shields.

Mask Information for Public Interaction

Cloth face coverings should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face covering the nose and mouth
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape



DON'Ts



Do not use a mask that is dirty, wet, or damaged



Do not share your mask with others



Do not use a mask that is difficult to breathe through



Do not wear your mask loosely



Do not wear your mask under your nose



Do not uncover your face or remove your mask if there are people within 6 feet

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends other everyday actions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, such as avoiding people who are sick, avoiding touching your eyes or nose, and covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue. People who are sick should [stay home](#) and not go into crowded public places or visit people in hospitals. Workers who are sick should follow CDC guidelines and [stay home when they are sick](#). Do not report to work if you are sick, develop COVID-19 symptoms, or believe you may have been exposed by close contact.

If you have symptoms at your workplace, please leave and seek medical care or COVID-19 testing. Resources for testing are available in Indiana through medical providers, and a map of testing sites in Indiana can be found [here](#) (no physician order needed for ISDH testing sites).