

# Masks Save Lives



As your partner in health care who is concerned about the well-being of all people we serve, Avera stands with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in recommending that you wear a mask anytime you are near people who aren't living in your household.

## How do masks reduce the spread of COVID-19?

- Wearing face masks has been proven to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and decrease hospitalizations and deaths. <sup>1,4</sup>
- COVID-19 is spread by respiratory droplets, even from people with no symptoms. Masks stop respiratory droplets before they reach others, preventing the spread of COVID-19. <sup>2</sup>

## Can someone be medically exempt from wearing a mask?

- The CDC recommends that children younger than 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove a face mask themselves should not wear a mask.

## What happens if I don't wear a mask?

- You are at increased risk for being infected with COVID-19 if you don't wear a mask. If you cannot wear a mask, you should isolate at home.

## Should my child wear a mask to school?

- Avera recommends that all staff and students wear face masks in school, with consideration to the student's individual education plan (IEP), if necessary.

## Are you safe if one person wears a mask and the other person doesn't?

- When you wear a mask, you are protecting other people from your respiratory droplets. <sup>3</sup>
- If everyone wears a mask, COVID-19 can be reduced to controllable levels, preventing further waves of the pandemic. <sup>5</sup>

## Can people with no symptoms still spread COVID-19?

- Yes. 10% to 50% of people with COVID-19 are asymptomatic, but they can still spread COVID-19. <sup>1</sup>

## Do you need to wear a mask outside? Or is it only necessary to wear a mask indoors?

- You should wear a mask anytime you are near people who aren't living in your household.

## Does wearing a mask reduce your oxygen levels?

- Using a face mask, even for a long period of time, has not been shown to cause carbon dioxide toxicity in healthy people. <sup>6</sup>
- The CDC recommends that children younger than 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face mask themselves should not wear a mask.

## Are cloth masks enough or does it only matter if you are wearing an N-95?

- N-95 respirators are not necessary for everyday use, and can be uncomfortable and restrictive.
- N-95s are made to protect health care workers and their patients.
- Cloth or disposable masks, when worn correctly, have been shown to keep you safe, especially when you're also practicing social distancing and frequent hand washing.

To learn more, visit [avera.org/covid-19](https://www.avera.org/covid-19).

## Sources:

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