Wearing a facemask or face covering can help you protect yourself and others from getting and spreading COVID-19. Face coverings are designed to contain your respiratory droplets and airborne particles. They also provide you some protection from particles exhaled by other people.

**WHEN SHOULD I WEAR A FACE COVERING AT THE UW?**

Face coverings are required indoors, regardless of vaccination status, when other people are present, and in all public and common areas, such as lobbies, hallways, stairways, restrooms, elevators, and in shared vehicles.

Face coverings are strongly recommended outdoors, regardless of vaccination status, in crowded settings and places where it may be difficult to maintain distance from other people.

Refer to the [Face Covering Requirements webpage](https://www.ehs.washington.edu) for additional requirements and FAQs.

Cloth face coverings do not replace job-specific requirements for use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

**WHEN CAN I REMOVE MY FACE COVERING AT THE UW?**

It is okay to remove your face covering when:

- Working or spending time alone in a personal office or workspace with the door closed
- Operating a vehicle with no passengers
- Inside an assigned on-campus residential unit
- Actively eating or drinking in appropriate places
- Any party to a communication is deaf or hard of hearing and not wearing a face covering is essential to communication

Read the full list on the [Face Covering Requirements webpage](https://www.ehs.washington.edu).

**WHAT TYPE OF FACE COVERING SHOULD I WEAR?**

A face covering will protect you and others when it:

- Fits snugly against the sides of the face
- Completely covers the nose and mouth
- Can be secured with ties, ear loops, elastic bands or other equally effective method
- Has at least two layers of cloth
- Has a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask (recommended)
- Allows you to breathe without restriction
- Is capable of being laundered
- Is free of holes, tears or valves that could release droplets

These do not provide adequate protection and should not be worn as a face covering:

- Bandanas
- Neck gators
- Face coverings with holes, tears or openings
- Respirator with an exhalation valve
- Face shield (when a facemask is not also worn)

**HOW DO I WEAR MY FACE COVERING CORRECTLY?**

See [the next page for information on how to wear your face covering correctly](https://www.ehs.washington.edu).

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**FACE MASK FOCUS SHEET**

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DO choose masks that

- Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric
- Completely cover your nose and mouth
- Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps

DO NOT choose masks that

- Are made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, for example, vinyl
- Have exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape

How NOT to wear a mask

- Around your neck
- On your forehead
- Under your nose
- Only on your nose
- On your chin
- Dangling from one ear
- On your arm

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

MORE INFORMATION

- Differences between Face Coverings, Facemasks and Respirators (www.ohs.washington.edu)
- Guidance on Facemask Use (www.ohs.washington.edu)
- CDC Your Guide to Masks (www.cdc.gov)
- Washington State Department of Health Face coverings and Masks (www.doh.wa.gov)
- Public Health — Seattle & King County Masks Protect You and Me (kingcounty.gov/masks)

Contact EH&S at ehsdept@uw.edu or 206.543.7262 with questions.