







# Recommended Protective Face Mask Guidance (Revised 3/21/2022)

If you choose to wear a mask, CDC recommends you **wear the most protective mask you can that fits well and that you will wear consistently.**

RECOMMENDED Face Masks		Information on Recommended Face Masks
<b>Disposable Surgical Mask</b> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knot the ear loops where they attach to the mask's edges and then tuck in and flatten the extra material close to the face</li> <li>• Contain droplets but do not make a tight seal on the face</li> <li>• Available in different thicknesses with different ability to protect; if worn alone, choose a higher quality mask such as an ASTM level 2 or 3</li> <li>• Intended for one-time use, must be disposed of after use</li> <li>• A cloth mask may be worn on top of a disposable mask to provide an extra layer of protection. The cloth mask should push the edges of the disposable mask against your face</li> </ul>
<b>N95 or KN95 Respirator Masks</b> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wearing an N95/KN95 may be considered in certain circumstances related to the working/learning environment and inherent health risks of the individual; see below for more information</li> <li>• N95 respirators, when required for certain occupations, need medical clearance and proper fitting</li> <li>• There are a large number of counterfeit respirator masks available on the market. <a href="#">Learn more.</a></li> </ul>

LESS EFFECTIVE Face Masks		Information on Less Effective Face Masks
<b>Cloth Mask</b> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When worn alone (and not over a disposable surgical mask) cloth masks do not provide sufficient protection against more transmissible variants</li> <li>• Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face</li> <li>• Be secured with ties or ear loops</li> <li>• Include multiple layers of fabric (three is ideal, with an absorbent innermost layer made of cotton and a moisture-wicking outer layer made of polyester)</li> <li>• A white innermost layer is recommended to detect moisture easily (replace if moisture is identified)</li> <li>• Can be laundered and should be washed before reuse</li> </ul>

NOT EFFECTIVE Face Masks		Information on Not Permitted Face Masks
<b>Neck Gaiter, Bandana, Scarf, T-shirt or Towel</b> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited ability to contain droplets</li> </ul>
<b>Mask with Valve</b> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masks with valves should not be used as they can expel exhaled air into the environment, increasing the risk for others</li> </ul>
<b>Face Shield</b> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not approved unless worn together with an approved face mask</li> <li>• Lack of evidence of efficacy in containing droplets</li> </ul>

## Individuals at High Risk

Everyone is at risk for getting COVID-19 if they are exposed to the virus; however, some people are more likely than others to become severely ill. For more information about conditions that increase risk for COVID-19, see the [CDC](#).

UT community members at increased risk who engage in low-risk activities such as walking around campus and sitting in classrooms where social distancing can be maintained except for brief periods are encouraged to double mask or wear face masks with increased protective ability, such as a KN95 mask or an N95 mask with medical clearance and proper fitting.

## Individuals in High Exposure Environments

UT community members in higher risk environments are expected to use face coverings with increased protective ability. In general, cloth face masks are not appropriate substitutes for surgical masks or respirators in workplaces where the latter are recommended and available.