



The 411 on PPE

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Information based on guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and
the Porter County Health Department*

Recent studies show that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. To reduce the spread of coronavirus, the CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

Cloth face coverings are an additional step to help slow the spread of COVID-19 when combined with every day preventive actions and social distancing in public settings.

Who should NOT wear masks?

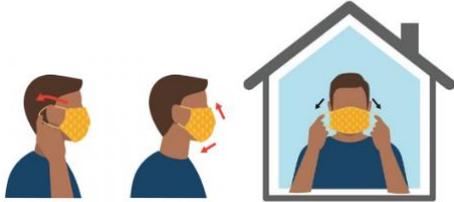
- Children under the age of 2
- Those with trouble breathing
- Those who are unconscious
- Those unable to remove the mask without assistance

Types of masks/face coverings

- **Cloth face coverings**
A cloth mask helps prevent respiratory droplets from being spread by the wearer and protection from larger respiratory droplets from others. Cloth face coverings are not considered personal protective equipment or PPE.
- **N-95 masks**
N-95 masks are considered PPE. They are of a tighter fit and prohibit additional particles from entering into the protected areas. OSHA mandates that workers who are required to wear an N-95 mask must be fit tested to ensure they are wearing the correct size.
- **Surgical masks and N-95 respirators** must be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended in the CDC guidelines. Healthcare workers and first responders not only deal with COVID patients, but they also need the N-95 masks for patients they encounter who have other infectious diseases.

Wear your face covering correctly

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering.
- Handle only by the ear loops or tie.
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face.
- Make sure you can breathe easily.
- Do not put the covering around your neck or upon your forehead.
- Do not touch the face covering and, if you do, wash your hands.



When you are home, take off your face covering carefully

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops.
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties.
- Fold the outside corners together.
- Place covering in the washing machine.
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing, and wash your hands immediately.

In summary

- Wearing a face covering is to help protect others if you're infected, but also even if you do not have any symptoms or you do not know you're infected.
- Keep the covering on your face the entire time you're in public.
- Wash your cloth mask after every use.
- "I wear a mask to protect you and you wear a mask to protect me."

How to clean face coverings

- If you are going to use a washing machine, you can include your face covering with your regular laundry. Use regular laundry detergent and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth used to make the face covering.
- If you are going to wash your mask by hand, prepare a bleach solution by mixing 1/3-cup household bleach per gallon of room temperature water or 4 tsp. household bleach per quart of room temperature water. Soak the face-covering in the bleach solution for 5 minutes before rinsing thoroughly with cool or room temperature water.
NOTE: Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection. Some bleach products, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing, may not be suitable for

disinfection. Ensure the bleach product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.

Make sure to dry your cloth face covering entirely after washing

- If using a dryer, use the highest heat setting and leave it in the dryer until completely dry.
- If air drying, lay the fabric flat and allow to dry completely. If possible, place the cloth face covering in direct sunlight.

What do we know about social distancing?

- Limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of coronavirus disease.
- Social distancing, also called “physical distancing,” means keeping space between yourself and others outside of your home.
- To practice social or physical distancing, stay at least 6 feet (about two arms’ length) from each other.
- In addition to everyday steps to prevent COVID-19, keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to this virus and slowing its spread locally and across the country and world.
- Limit close contact with others who are outside of your household.
- Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is crucial to stay away from others when possible, even if they have no symptoms. Social distancing is especially essential for people who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- However, many people have personal circumstances or situations presenting challenges with practicing social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Why practice social distancing?

- COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact for a prolonged period. Spread happens when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from their mouth or nose are launched into the air and land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. The droplets can also be inhaled into the lungs.
- It may be possible that a person can contract COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes. However, this is not thought to be the primary way the virus spreads. COVID-19 can live for hours or days on a surface, depending on sunlight, humidity, and surface type. Social distancing helps limit opportunities to come in contact with contaminated surfaces and infected people outside the home.
- Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing severe complications from COVID-19. There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease.
- Although the risk of severe illness may be different for everyone, anyone can get and spread COVID-19. Everyone has a role to play in slowing the spread and protecting themselves, their family, and their community.

What about gloves?

If you wear rubber gloves or any other type of gloves, make sure you take all the precautions that you would if you were not wearing gloves as gloves can provide a false sense of security. You must treat gloves as if you were not even wearing them.

- Wash your hands before putting your gloves on.
- Don't touch your eyes, mouth or nose.
- Don't touch designated clean areas in your car or house while you are still wearing your gloves.

To take gloves off:

- Pinch outside of your glove by the wrist and pull off your glove to turn it inside out.
- Grab your other glove and pull it off inside out and throw it away.
- Do not use your hands to touch the outside of the gloves.
- Wash your hands.

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus

- Again, wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Everyone should wear a face covering when they are out in public.
- Continue to maintain about 6 feet between yourself and others. Please note, the cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.
- If you do not have your face covering when around others, always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them using detergent or soap and water before disinfection, then use a household disinfectant.

Throughout this pandemic, it is vital to monitor your health

- Be alert for symptoms. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose

- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. The CDC will continue to update this list as they learn more about COVID-19. Please remember you may have COVID-19 without ever having symptoms. These symptoms are especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be challenging to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.

Take your temperature if symptoms develop

However, don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen. Please refer to CDC guidelines if symptoms develop.

What if you think you have COVID 19?

- Stay home except to get medical care.
Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home without medical supervision. Do not leave your home, except to get medical care and do not visit public areas.
- Take care of yourself.
Get rest and stay hydrated. Take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen, to help you feel better.
- Stay in touch with your doctor. Call before you get medical care. Be sure to seek care if you have trouble breathing, have any other emergency warning signs, or think it is an emergency.
- Avoid public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.
- As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people and pets in your home. If possible, you should use a separate bathroom. If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a cloth face covering.
- Monitor your COVID-19 symptoms, such as fever, cough, or other symptoms.
- Follow care instructions from your healthcare provider and local health department. Your local health authorities may give instructions on checking your symptoms and reporting information.

When to seek emergency medical attention

If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Additional guidance is available from the CDC for those living in close quarters and in shared housing. The CDC also provides additional information on COVID-19 and animals if you have questions about animals and pets.

Getting tested

- ISDH/Optum 1502 Linwood Dr. The Armory off US 30
888-634-1123
- Great Lakes Lab 1051 Transport Dr. Valparaiso
888-464-8885
- Porter Regional Hospital
219-983-8300
- Call your primary healthcare provider

Available Help

- Porter County Health Department
219-465-3525 <https://www.porterco.org/297/Health>
- CDC CDC-Info 800-232-4636
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Coping with COVID-related stress

- Know what to do if you are sick and are concerned about COVID-19. Contact a health professional before you start any self-treatment for COVID-19.
- Know where and how to get treatment and other support services and resources, including counseling or therapy (in person or through telehealth services).
- Take care of your emotional health. Taking care of your emotional health will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media. Hearing repeatedly about the pandemic can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body.
 - Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate.
 - Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
 - Exercise regularly.
 - Get plenty of sleep.
 - Avoid excessive alcohol and drug use.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and share how you are feeling.
- Connect with your community or faith-based organizations. When social distancing measures are in place, considering connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.

If you (or someone you know) feel overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others:

- Call 911
- Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 (press 2 for Spanish), or text TalkWithUs for English or Hablamos for Spanish to 66746. Spanish speakers from Puerto Rico can text Hablamos to 1-787-339-2663.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for English, 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish.