

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.
- COVID-19 is spread by respiratory droplets, even from people with no symptoms. When you wear a mask, it blocks your exhaled respiratory droplets from reaching others, and it prevents you from inhaling the respiratory droplets of others.

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, and protecting yourself from inhaling the respiratory droplets of others.
- If everyone wears a mask, COVID-19 can be reduced to controllable levels, preventing further waves of the pandemic.



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.

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.
- 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).

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Scientific Brief: Community Use of Cloth Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV2: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/masking-science-sars-cov2.html>

