

H-3 Monthly Newsletter

January :

January's newsletter will focus primarily as a reminder, that COVID-19 is STILL a serious GLOBAL Pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published an estimated forecast, that Alabama and most United States and territories will continue to see a rise in the number of Coronavirus diagnoses AND deaths between now and the end of January. This forecast is based on the number of new cases, as well as the COVID-19 deaths, predicted to occur over the next on 3-4 weeks. Hence the importance of continuing to wear masks and practice social distancing remain our primary responsibilities, in keeping ourselves and others safe!! There is hope in site, with the new vaccines, that were introduced during the month of December, but it will take time to distribute and implement the vaccines to all who are willing to take them.



"For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord. "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future."
 Jeremiah 29:11.



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Happy New year!!! We have left 2020 behind. It's a "NEW" year, but we want to stress that we are bringing the responsibilities of combating / eliminating The Coronavirus Pandemic from 2020 into the new year with us!! In essence, we are seeing an increase in the number of cases AND deaths, daily!!!

It is MORE IMPORTANT than EVER, that we PRACTICE the 3 W's AND the 4 S's!!!:

Welcome
STAY SAFE.
STAY HEALTHY.

REMEMBER



Thank You!

It will take time to "Flatten the Curve" of this Global illness!! PLEASE BE PATIENT and FOLLOW the advice of medical scientists, who are working tirelessly to eradicate this disease!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- People age 2 and older should wear masks in public settings and when around people who don't live in their household.
- When you wear a mask, you protect others as well as yourself. Masks work best when everyone wears one.
- A mask is NOT a substitute for social distancing. Masks should still be worn in addition to staying at least 6 feet apart, especially when indoors around people who don't live in your household.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol after touching or removing your mask.
- Masks may not be necessary when you are outside by yourself away from others, or with other people who live in your household. However, some localities may have mask mandates while out in public, please check for the rules in your locality.
- CDC continues to study the effectiveness of different types of masks and update our recommendations as new scientific evidence becomes available. The most recent scientific brief is available here: [Scientific Brief: Community Use of Cloth Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2 | CDC](#)

EVIDENCE FOR EFFECTIVENESS OF MASKS



YOUR MASK HELPS PROTECT THOSE AROUND YOU

COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets. Respiratory droplets travel into the air when you cough, sneeze, talk, shout, or sing. These droplets can then land in the mouths or noses of people who are near you or they may breathe these droplets in.

Masks are a simple barrier to help prevent your respiratory droplets from reaching others. Studies show that masks reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth.

You should wear a mask, even if you do not feel sick. This is because several studies have found that people with COVID-19 who never develop symptoms (asymptomatic) and those who are not yet showing symptoms (pre-symptomatic) can still spread the virus to other people. Wearing a mask helps protect those around you, in case you are infected but not showing symptoms.

It is especially important to wear a mask when you are indoors with people you do not live with and when you are unable to stay at least 6 feet apart since COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in [close contact](#) with one another.

YOUR MASK OFFERS SOME PROTECTION TO YOU

[A cloth mask also offers some protection to you](#) too. How well it protects you from breathing in the virus likely depends on the fabrics used and how your mask is made (e.g. the type of fabric, the number of layers of fabric, how well the mask fits). CDC is currently studying these factors.

WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT WEAR A MASK

WHO SHOULD WEAR A MASK

Everyone 2 years of age and older should wear a mask in public settings and when they are around people who do not live in their household.

Wear a mask when caring for someone who is sick with COVID-19 (whether at home or in a non-healthcare setting). If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you may have COVID-19, wear a mask when you need to be around other people or animals, even in your own home.

CDC recognizes there are specific instances when wearing a mask may not be feasible. In these instances, consider [adaptations and alternatives](#).

WHO SHOULD NOT WEAR A MASK

Masks should not be worn by

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance
- Wearing masks may be difficult for some people with sensory, cognitive, or behavioral issues. If they are unable to wear a mask properly or cannot tolerate a mask, they should not wear one, and adaptations and alternatives should be considered

TYPES OF MASKS

[Some masks work better than others](#) to help stop the spread of COVID-19 outside of healthcare settings. Medical masks and N-95 respirators should not be used because they should be conserved for healthcare personnel.

RECOMMENDED



Non-medical disposable masks



Masks that fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face)



Masks made with breathable fabric (such as cotton)



Masks made with tightly woven fabric (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source)



Masks with two or three layers



Masks with inner filter pockets

NOT RECOMMENDED



Masks that do not fit properly (large gaps, too loose or too tight)



Masks made from materials that are hard to breathe through (such as plastic or leather)



Masks made from loosely woven fabric or that are knitted, i.e., fabrics that let light pass through



Masks with one layer



Masks with exhalation valves or vents



Wearing a scarf/ski mask as a mask

CLOTH MASKS

The most effective fabrics for cloth masks are

- Tightly woven fabrics, such as cotton and cotton blends
- Breathable
- Two or three fabric layers

Less effective fabrics for cloth masks are

- Loosely woven fabrics, such as loose knit fabrics
- Difficult to breathe through (like plastic or leather)
- Single layer

CDC is currently studying the effectiveness of various cloth mask materials. Refer to our [Scientific Brief: Community Use of Cloth Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2 | CDC for more information](#).



NON-MEDICAL DISPOSABLE MASKS

Disposable face masks are single-use masks. They are sold online and through large retail stores. These are not the same as surgical or other medical masks.

You may prefer using disposable masks in situations where your mask is likely to get wet or dirty. As with cloth masks, make sure your disposable mask fits close to your face without large side-gaps and completely covers your nose and mouth. Bring extra disposable masks with you in case you need to change out a dirty or wet mask.



MASKS WITH EXHALATION VALVES OR VENTS

CDC **does not recommend** using masks with exhalation valves or vents because this type of mask may not prevent you from spreading COVID-19 to others. The hole in the material may allow your respiratory droplets to escape and reach others. Research on the effectiveness of these types of masks is ongoing.



SURGICAL MASKS AND RESPIRATORS

Do not use surgical masks and respirators that are meant for healthcare workers. Currently, surgical masks and respirators are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders to prevent supply shortages.

CLEAR MASKS OR CLOTH MASKS WITH A CLEAR PLASTIC PANEL



Clear masks or cloth masks with a clear plastic panel are an alternative type of mask for people who interact with

- People who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Young children or students learning to read
- Students learning a new language
- People with disabilities
- People who need to see the proper shape of the mouth for making appropriate vowel sounds, e.g., in singing

If you use this type of mask, make sure

- You can breathe easily
- Excess moisture does not collect on the inside of the mask
- You remove the mask before sleeping, since the plastic part could form a seal around your mouth and nose and make it hard to breathe

The FDA recently approved a [transparent pdf iconexternal icon](#) medical mask. These transparent medical masks should be reserved for use by healthcare workers and patients who require them.

OTHER TYPES OF FACE PROTECTION



CDC does not recommend using face shields or goggles as a substitute for masks. Do NOT put a plastic face shield (or a mask) on newborns or infants.

Face shields and goggles are primarily used to protect the eyes of the person wearing it. Goggles do not cover the nose and mouth. Face shields have large gaps below and alongside the face, where your respiratory droplets may escape and reach others around you. At this time, we do not know how much protection a face shield provides to people around you. However, wearing a mask may not be feasible in every situation for some people.

FACE SHIELDS AND GOGGLES

For example, people who interact with those who are deaf or hearing impaired may find that a face shield is better than a mask when communicating. If you must wear a face shield instead of a mask:

- Choose a face shield that wraps around the sides of your face and extends below your chin or a hooded face shield. This is based on the limited available data that suggest these types of face shields are better at preventing spray of respiratory droplets.
- Wash your hands after removing the face shield. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing it.
- Clean and disinfect reusable face shields according to the manufacturer's instructions or by following CDC face shield cleaning instructions. If you use a disposable face shield, wear it once and throw it away according to the manufacturer's instructions.

MASK ADAPTATIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

CDC recognizes that wearing masks may not be possible in every situation or for some people. Those who cannot wear a mask are urged to prioritize virtual engagement when possible. For in-person activities, we have provided a few examples of what you can do to make wearing a mask more feasible and how to reduce the spread of COVID-19 if you cannot wear a mask.

SITUATIONS WHERE WEARING A MASK MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE

Make sure to maintain physical distance from others when you cannot wear a mask.

Dining

CDC recommends wearing a mask while dining in a restaurant, particularly indoors and when speaking with restaurant workers and servers, except when actively eating or drinking. The risk of COVID-19 spread [increases in a restaurant or bar setting](#) as interactions within 6 feet of others increase. Masks may reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread when worn in any of these risk scenarios.

Water activities

Do not wear a mask when doing activities that may get your mask wet, like [swimming at the beach or pool](#). A wet mask can make it difficult to breathe and may not work as well when wet.

High intensity activities

- Masks should be used in public settings, but if you are unable to wear a mask because of difficulty breathing during high intensity activities, choose a location with greater ventilation and air exchange (for instance, outdoors versus indoors) and where you can keep at least 6 feet from others during the activity.
- If you are able to wear a mask, remove your mask if it gets moist from sweat and replace it with a clean mask.
- Opt for an activity that does not require using mouth guards or helmets. Wearing a mask with these types of protective equipment is not safe if it makes it hard to breathe.
- Supervise children who are wearing a mask while playing sports.

CERTAIN GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO MAY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO WEAR A MASK

Some children 2 years and older, and people of any age with certain disabilities

Appropriate and consistent use of masks may be challenging for some children and for people of any age with certain disabilities, including cognitive, intellectual, developmental, sensory, and behavioral disorders.

When deciding if children and people with certain disabilities should wear a mask, determine if they can:

- Use a mask correctly
- Avoid frequent touching of the mask and their face
- Limit sucking, drooling, or having excess saliva on the mask
- Remove the mask without assistance

If children and people with certain disabilities are unable to wear a mask properly or cannot tolerate a mask, they should not wear one.

Those caring for children and people with certain disabilities who may not be able to wear a mask should

- Ask their healthcare provider for advice about their wearing a mask
- Ensure proper mask size and fit
- Remove their mask before sleeping, napping, when they may fall asleep (such as in a car seat or stroller), and in situations when continual supervision is not possible
- Consider prioritizing wearing a mask in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, particularly when indoors. Masks may not be necessary when you are outside by yourself away from others, or with other people who live in your household. However, some localities may have mask mandates while out in public and these mandates should always be followed.

Masks should **not** be worn by:

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance

People who are deaf or hard of hearing, and those who will interact with people who are hearing impaired

If you interact with people who rely on reading lips, you may have difficulty communicating while wearing a mask.

- Consider wearing a clear mask or a cloth mask with a clear panel
- If you are not able to get a clear mask, consider using written communication, closed captioning, or decreasing background noise to make communication possible while wearing a mask that blocks lips

People with certain underlying medical conditions

Most people with underlying medical conditions can and should wear masks.

- If you have respiratory conditions and are concerned about wearing a mask safely, discuss with your healthcare provider the benefits and potential risks of wearing a mask.
- If you have asthma, you can wear a mask. Discuss with your healthcare provider if you have any concerns about wearing a mask.

Outdoor workers

If you work in a setting where masks could increase the risk of [heat-related illness](#) or cause safety concerns (for example, straps getting caught in machinery):

- Discuss with an occupational safety and health professional about what mask would be suitable.

- Prioritize wearing masks indoors and when in close contact with other people, like during group travel or shift meetings. Some localities may require wearing masks in public while outdoors, and these requirements should be followed.
- In cold weather, wear masks under winter gear such as scarves and ski masks. If masks become wet from breathing or snow, replace them with dry ones. Keep one or more backups for this purpose.

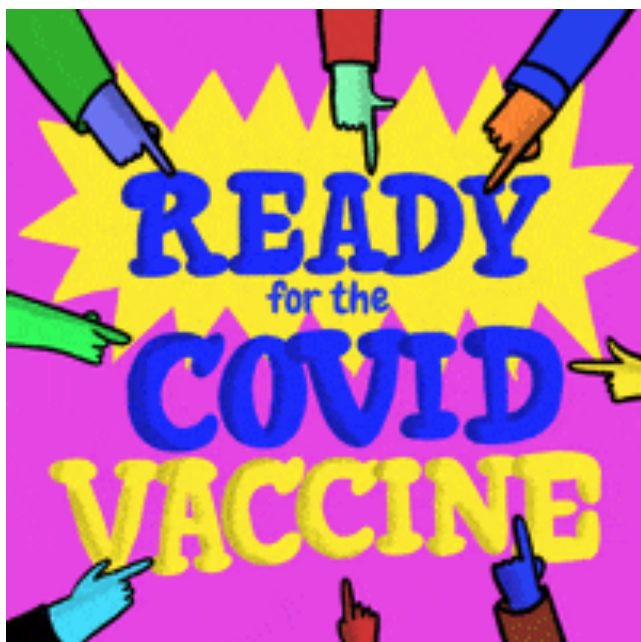
MASK USE AND CARBON DIOXIDE

WEARING A MASK DOES NOT RAISE THE CARBON DIOXIDE (CO₂) LEVEL IN THE AIR YOU BREATHE

A cloth mask does not provide an airtight fit across the face. The CO₂ completely escapes into the air through and around the sides of the cloth mask when you breathe out or talk. CO₂ is small enough to easily pass through any cloth mask material. In contrast, the virus that causes COVID-19 is much larger than CO₂, so it cannot pass **as easily** through a properly designed and properly worn cloth mask.

COLD WEATHER

- In cold weather, masks may become wet from breathing, snow, or other precipitation. Change a mask when it becomes wet. A wet mask is harder to breathe through, is less efficient at filtering, and vents more around the edges of the mask. It is especially important to have one or more replacement masks during cold weather. If your reusable mask becomes wet, put it in a sealed plastic bag until you can wash it.
- Scarves and other headwear such as ski masks and balaclavas used for warmth are usually made of loosely knit fabrics that are not suitable for use as masks to prevent COVID-19 transmission. They can be worn over a mask.
- If you wear glasses, find a mask that fits closely over your nose or has a nose wire to help reduce fogging. Consider using an antifogging spray that is made for eyeglasses.



BENEFITS OF GETTING A COVID-19 VACCINE

We understand that some people may be concerned about getting vaccinated now that COVID-19 vaccines are available in the United States. While more COVID-19 vaccines are being developed as quickly as possible, routine processes and procedures remain in place to [ensure the safety](#) of any vaccine that is authorized or approved for use. Safety is a top priority, and there are many reasons to get vaccinated.

CAN A COVID-19 VACCINE MAKE ME SICK WITH COVID-19?

No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 so a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19. [Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

Below is a summary of the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination based on what we currently know. CDC will continue to update this page as more data become available.

COVID-19 VACCINATION WILL HELP KEEP YOU FROM GETTING COVID-19

- All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19. Learn more about the different COVID-19 vaccines.
- All COVID-19 vaccines that are in development are being carefully evaluated in clinical trials and will be authorized or approved only if they make it substantially less likely you'll get COVID-19. Learn more about how federal partners are ensuring COVID-19 vaccines work.
- Based on what we know about vaccines for other diseases and early data from clinical trials, experts believe that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may also help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Experts continue to conduct more studies about the effect of COVID-19 vaccination on severity of illness from COVID-19, as well as its ability to keep people from spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID-19 VACCINATION IS A SAFER WAY TO HELP BUILD PROTECTION

- COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications, and there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get sick, you could spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you.
- Clinical trials of all vaccines must first show they are safe and effective before any vaccine can be authorized or approved for use, including COVID-19 vaccines. The known and potential benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine must outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine for use under what is known as an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Watch a video on what an EUA is.
- Getting COVID-19 may offer some natural protection, known as immunity. Current evidence suggests that reinfection with the virus that causes COVID-19 is uncommon in the 90 days after initial infection. However, experts don't know for sure how long this protection lasts, and the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 far outweighs any benefits of natural immunity. COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you by creating an antibody (immune system) response without having to experience sickness.
- Both natural immunity and immunity produced by a vaccine are important parts of COVID-19 disease that experts are trying to learn more about, and CDC will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.

COVID-19 VACCINATION WILL BE AN IMPORTANT TOOL TO HELP STOP THE PANDEMIC

- Wearing masks and social distancing help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, but these measures are not enough. Vaccines will work with your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed.
- The combination of getting vaccinated and following CDC's recommendations to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from COVID-19.
- Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools we have available. As experts learn more about how COVID-19 vaccination may help reduce spread of the disease in communities, CDC will continue to update the recommendations to protect communities using the latest science.

Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html>