



City of Milpitas

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Face Coverings – Frequently Asked Questions

Updated April 24, 2020

What is a face covering?

A face covering means any fabric or cloth that covers the mouth and nose.

How can I make my own face covering using items I have at home?

A face covering can be made using household items like scarves, bandanas, T-shirts, sweatshirts, towels, or other fabric. Some patterns require sewing, while others do not. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides a guide to creating your own face covering:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Face-Coverings-Guidance.aspx>

Learn how to make one at the City's [Virtual Community Center](#). Fabric face coverings can also be ordered online from manufacturers.

Why should I wear a face covering?

Recent information from the California Department of Public Health and the CDC indicates that covering your nose and mouth can slow the spread of COVID-19. Individuals can be contagious before the onset of symptoms, and some individuals who become infected can be asymptomatic, or able to transmit the disease without having symptoms. As a result, it's possible to be contagious and not know it. Wearing face coverings is a simple way to help flatten the curve and prevent the spread of this pandemic.

Do I need to wear a face covering when I'm out shopping?

Yes. Beginning April 24, and through the end of the pandemic, all employees and customers at certain businesses in Milpitas are required to wear a face covering when in public businesses. This does not mean we are "reopening" the economy yet; this order applies to businesses that are considered essential and remain open per the County health order. This includes places like:

- Healthcare operations as defined by the County Order
- Grocery stores, farmers' markets, food banks, convenience stores, etc.
- Restaurants
- Gas stations
- Hardware stores
- Bicycle repair and supply shops
- Plumbers, electricians, exterminators, and other service providers
- Laundromats and dry cleaners
- Funeral home providers
- Taxis, rental car companies, and rideshare services
- Professional services such as legal, notary, or accounting for essential in-person activities

These businesses must provide face coverings for their employees, and consumers/shoppers should also cover their faces before entering these locations.

Do I need to wear a face mask to go to the doctor?

If you have an in-person doctor's appointment, you should wear a face covering or surgical mask.

Do I need to wear a face covering if I'm out on a walk with members of my household?

Wearing a face covering is encouraged, but not required.

Do I need to wear a face covering while I'm exercising, like riding my bike or running?

Wearing a face mask is not required during exercise. Please note that you should not be participating in any exercise, including running or biking, with anyone who lives outside your household at this time.

Do I need to wear a face covering if I'm walking my dog around the block, or am at the park?

This is encouraged, but not required. If you cannot maintain six feet of distance between you and anyone outside of your household in these situations, you should wear a mask.

Do I still need to stay at least six feet away from others if I'm wearing a cloth face covering?

Yes. Wearing a cloth face covering does not eliminate the need for social distancing. Cloth face coverings are an additional public health measure that should be taken by everyone who is able to do so. It is not a replacement for social distancing, frequent hand washing, and other preventative actions like avoiding touching your face. The CDC has guidance on how to protect yourself:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

What kind of face covering should I be wearing?

Most people can use cloth face coverings, which can protect others from possible exposure to respiratory droplets that come from our mouth when we talk, sneeze, cough, and even breathe. N95 respiratory masks and surgical masks should be worn by healthcare workers, first responders, people who provide care to a person who might have COVID-19 or other communicable diseases. Any face mask is dangerous for children under two years old, so children under two should **never** have a face mask placed on them, even in public. If possible, leave small children at home when running errands.

How will this order be enforced?

This order is enforceable by administrative citation only and is not a crime (misdemeanor or infraction). However, the first step of enforcement will be education, not citations.

How do I report a violation?

Please email facecoverings@ci.milpitas.ca.gov or call (408) 586-3072.

Can a business refuse service to patrons not wearing a face mask or covering?

Yes, if they have posted a sign at a clearly visible location of the business providing notice of the face covering requirement. If no sign is posted, a business cannot refuse service.

I don't have a scarf or bandana. Do I need to buy a face covering or masks because of the order?

No. Face coverings can be made by hand out of common household items like T-shirts, socks, towels, denim, linen, etc. The covering can be secured with ties, straps, or just wrapped around the lower half of the face.

Who should not wear a face covering?

Anyone who is in any of the following categories should not wear a face covering:

- Anyone who is unable to remove the mask or covering without help
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or other respiratory problems, or is unconscious
- Children under 2 years of age

Does my child need to wear a face covering?

It depends on the age of your child. Children under two years of age should never wear a face covering. The City of Milpitas suggests children over six years of age should wear face masks. However, if your child has breathing problems like asthma, they should not wear a face covering.

If your child is too young to wear a face covering or has breathing problems, we recommend they stay at home rather than go on trips for essential needs, if childcare is available.

Further, if your child is considered high-risk or severely immunocompromised and must make trips to the doctor's office or other essential trips, they should wear an N-95 mask. Families of children who are higher risk are encouraged to wear a surgical mask if they are sick to prevent the spreading of the illness to others.

Children with severe cognitive or respiratory impairments may have difficulty tolerating a face mask or covering. For these children, special precautions may be necessary, see: (<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/Cloth-Face-Coverings-for-Children-During-COVID-19.aspx>)

Can I buy a cloth face covering?

Yes. Many online retailers are selling cloth face masks online. For more information, see: (www.cnet.com/how-to/20-places-to-buy-face-masks-and-cloth-coverings-online)

How often should I wash or clean my cloth face covering?

Cloth face coverings should be routinely washed by hand or in a washing machine depending on frequency of use.

I have protective face covering equipment I'd like to donate. What can I do?

If you would like to donate unopened N95 masks or surgical masks, you can drop them off at any fire station in Milpitas.

Watch the CDC's American Sign Language use of cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19:

<https://youtu.be/t9cnxxsEKpk>

Here is the link to the CDC's video of the Surgeon General making a face covering:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPx1yqvJgf4>