Wear a Face Mask to Keep COVID-19 from Spreading

Always carry a mask with you and put it on when you need to.

People with COVID-19 can spread the virus even if they don’t have any symptoms. Wearing a mask protects both you and the people around you from getting or spreading COVID-19.

You are required to wear a face mask or covering in indoor public spaces in Vermont – even if you’re fully vaccinated. Indoor public spaces include businesses, public buildings, and group living settings (such as long-term care facilities, nursing homes, apartment and condo complexes).

In indoor private settings we recommend that you wear a mask anytime people who are not fully vaccinated get together (for example, at a gathering with family and friends or riding in a car).

When you are outdoors, masks are only required when you are in a crowd or with multiple other households where you can't maintain a 6-foot distance. Follow this guidance whether you are vaccinated or not.

You can decide whether you need a mask by considering three elements:

- Outside
- Masked
- Distanced

You need two of these three elements. For example – if you’re outside and distanced, you don’t need a mask. If you’re outside and not distanced, wear a mask. And if you’re not outside, you should wear a mask and keep a distance.

Masks are not required when you are doing strenuous exercise or activities. They are also not required for – and should not be worn by:

- Children under the age of 2
- Anyone who can’t remove it without assistance
- Anyone who has a medical or behavioral reason for not wearing a mask
- Anyone who has trouble breathing

If you have a medical or developmental condition, or have trouble breathing, you do not have to show evidence or documentation of your condition.

The CDC requires everyone to wear masks when using public transportation (for example buses, trains or airplanes) including while you’re waiting, boarding, traveling on, and getting off.

Here are some tips to help you make sure you always have a mask with you: store your masks with your keys, phone or wallet so they’re easier to remember, and keep an extra in your coat pocket, bag or car just in case.
How to wear a mask:

A mask must be worn properly to be effective and avoid spreading the virus:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before putting it on.
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Make sure it fits snugly against the side of your face.
- Slip the loops over your ears or tie the strings behind your head.
- Do not touch it when you are wearing it.
- Remove it by handling only the ear loops or ties and fold the outside corners together.
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth, then wash your hands immediately after removing it.
- If you wear glasses, find a mask that fits closely over your nose or has a nose wire to help reduce fogging.

Wash your masks regularly, by hand or machine, using detergent.

Include your mask with your regular laundry. Use regular laundry detergent and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth used to make the mask. Use the highest heat setting and leave it in the dryer until it’s completely dry. Have a few on hand so you can rotate them for washing and have enough clean ones ready to wear.

What to do during hot or cold weather:

During hot weather, if you feel like you are overheating and are having trouble breathing because it is hot, take off your mask, drink water, rest and seek shade or a cool place. It is important that you stay at least 6 feet away from others whenever possible, especially when you are not wearing a mask.

During cold weather, change your mask when it becomes wet. Keep a spare mask to replace the wet one, and put the wet one in a plastic bag until you get home. If you need to wear a scarf, ski mask or balaclava, wear it over your mask.

Make your own.

CDC has instructions on how to make a mask in several different methods, including machine or hand-sewn, a no-sew method with a t-shirt and scissors, and a no-sew method with a bandana.

For more information:

- Frequently asked questions about masks
- Face coverings for children
- Where to buy face coverings in Vermont
- CDC’s Guide to Masks