Use of Cloth Face Masks to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

DHEC recommends wearing cloth face masks in public settings where physical distancing is difficult to maintain like grocery stores and pharmacies. Wearing a face mask can help to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus from transmitting it to others.

How to Wear Cloth Face Masks

Remember to wash your hands before and after putting on a face mask. Don't touch your face or the mask after putting it on.

Cloth face masks should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face.
- be secured with ties or ear loops.
- include multiple layers of fabric.
- cover your nose and mouth and allow for breathing without restriction.
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

Continue to keep a 6 feet distance between yourself and others while wearing a mask. The mask is not a substitute for social distancing.

Options to Improve your Face Mask

- Wear a disposable mask under your cloth face mask for extra protection.
- When wearing two masks, tie knots in the ear loops of the disposable mask and tuck the cloth mask over the disposable mask to ensure a snug fit.
- Use a mask fitter or nylon mask cover.
- Use adhesive nose strips or masks with a nose wire to fit the mask snugly against your nose.
- Your best choice for a mask is one that fits you properly. Explore different options to find the mask that is the best fit for you.

Remember:

- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose and mouth when removing your face mask.
- Cloth face masks should be washed regularly after each day worn.
- Clean a cloth face mask by adding it to your laundry in the washing machine and dry it in the dryer or air dry.

Cloth face masks should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face mask without assistance.

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