



## ACS Guidance for Children's Use of Face Covering

(April 19, 2020)

### **Purpose:**

In light of new data about [how COVID-19 spreads](#), along with evidence of widespread COVID-19 illness in communities across the country, the CDC recommends that people, including children, wear a [cloth face covering](#) to cover their nose and mouth in the community setting, or if a distance of 6 feet from others cannot be maintained.

According to an Executive Order from Governor Andrew Cuomo, effective at 8 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 2020 any individual who is over age two and able to medically tolerate a face-covering shall be required to cover their nose and mouth with a mask or cloth face-covering *when in a public place* and unable to maintain, or when not maintaining, social distance.

### **ACS Guidance:**

Noting the difficulties in managing this for young children, all children over the age of 2, should always wear a face covering when within 6 feet of others in public. A cloth face covering should be worn whenever people are in a community setting, especially in situations where children may be near people other than members of the immediate household. These settings include grocery stores and pharmacies. These face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing. Cloth face coverings are especially important to wear in public in areas of widespread COVID-19 illness.

### **Exceptions:**

Children 2 years old and younger should be exempt from wearing a face covering. In addition, children (any age), who are non-verbal, or diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, or any child that has severe asthma or difficulty breathing with a mask on, or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance, should be exempt from wearing a face covering.

### **General pointers for face coverings:**

1. Face coverings, including masks and cloth coverings, may be re-used as long as they are not wet, contaminated or damaged.
2. Cloth masks should be washed and dried daily. They should also be washed when contaminated.
3. Each face covering is for personal use only – it should not be used by someone else. Write your name or place an identifying mark on the loops or ties so you know it is yours.
4. A face covering should be dry before use.

### **How to put on a face covering:**

1. Child-caring adults should provide assistance to children when needed.
2. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the face covering.
3. Check the face covering to make sure there are no obvious tears or holes in either side of the face covering. An adult should check children's masks daily to make sure there are no holes or tears.
4. Always use the same side of the face covering as the front and the same side as the back (side in contact with the face).
5. Follow the instructions below for the type of face covering you are using. Do not touch the front side.
  - Face Covering with Ear loops: Hold the covering by the ear loops. Place a loop around each ear.
  - Face Covering with Ties: Bring the face covering to your nose level and place the ties over the crown of your head and secure with a bow. Then take the bottom ties, one in each hand, and secure with a bow at the nape of your neck.
  - Bandana or kerchief. Fold the bandana into a triangle. Place the base of the triangle over the bridge of your nose with the top of triangle towards your chin. Secure the bandana at the nape of your neck.
6. Pull the bottom of the face covering over the mouth and chin.

### **How to remove a face covering:**

1. Child-caring adults should provide assistance to children when needed.
2. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the face covering. Avoid touching the front of the face covering. Only touch the ear loops/ties/band.
  - Face Covering with Ear loops: Hold both ear loops and gently lift and remove the covering.
  - Face Covering with Ties: Untie the bottom bow first then untie the top bow and pull the covering away from you as the ties are loosened.
  - Bandana: untie from behind the neck and fold the front side facing in.
3. Fold the front edges of the face covering over each other. Store the face covering in your container (only 1 face covering per bag).
4. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

### **When to *immediately* remove a mask or face covering for a child/youth:**

If a child is choking, having a seizure, vomiting or having difficulty breathing; an adult must immediately remove the mask or face covering, provide assistance or call for help/911.

**Adults should look for signs of distress – decreased activity, shaking, choking, eye rolling, facial color change or any other concerns when a child/youth is wearing a mask or face covering.**