USE AND CARE OF FACE COVERINGS

Following CDC recommendations, Connecticut Governor Lamont has ordered face coverings to be worn by anyone in public. This physical barrier can help contain the spread of respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. This is considered *source control*. A face covering is not intended to protect the wearer, but by covering their mouth and nose with a face covering, they are less likely to transmit the virus to others if they are asymptomatic or have unrecognized, early COVID-19 symptoms. The CDC explains that your face covering may help to protect others, while their face covering may help protect you. In contrast, *personal protective equipment (PPE)*, such as gloves or a respirator, protects the wearer. A face covering also prevents the wearer from touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Research shows that the use of face coverings reduces community transmission of COVID-19.

**Wear a Mask or Face Covering in Public Settings**

Members of the Yale community are expected to comply with the Governor’s order and wear a mask or a face covering when outside or inside any space that can reasonably be expected to be shared (e.g., common work areas, hallways, and restrooms). Follow these practices:

- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on and removing the mask or face covering.
- Your mouth and nose should be fully covered.
- Tie or secure the face covering to prevent slipping.
- If you have difficulty breathing when wearing a face covering, it should be removed.

A face covering is not a replacement for social distancing and hand hygiene.

### Examples of Proper Face Coverings and Their Use

![Face Covering](image1)

![Face Covering](image2)

### Examples of UNACCEPTABLE Face Coverings with Exhalation Valves

![Face Covering](image3)

### Face Covering MUST Cover the Nose

![Face Covering](image4)
Obtaining a Mask or Face Covering

A 3-ply mask or face covering appropriate for each individuals’ work activities are provided by a variety of means. A face covering brought from home or acquired from other sources is acceptable, but it must not have an exhalation valve. It should be easily washable or disposable.

If you plan to purchase a large quantity of face coverings, EHS is available to help you evaluate samples and advise on fabric and design. Helpful published research on face coverings is available.

Caring for Your Mask or Face Covering

3-ply masks should be disposed of after every shift, or if damaged or contaminated. When removing your mask, only touch the loops that go around your ear. Masks can be disposed of in the normal trash.

Cloth face coverings should be washed after each use. CDC instructions for washing face coverings are here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wash-cloth-face-coverings.html.

It is important to always remove face coverings correctly and wash your hands after handling or touching a used face covering.

Special Situations

If you are concerned about your respiratory protection for certain tasks and assignments, contact EHS for a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) hazard assessment. EHS will provide the appropriate respiratory protection for your work.

A face covering is not required when working alone in segregated spaces (e.g., cubicles with walls, private offices, etc.) or when walking alone outdoors away from others. The requirement for a face covering does not apply to anyone for whom doing so would be contrary to his or her health or safety because of a medical condition. Contact EHS to determine if alternative protections can be provided.

Cloth face coverings are not allowed in Yale laboratories. People working in Yale laboratories have been provided surgical masks and other types of respiratory protection. A mask provided for laboratory use may be used as face covering outside of the laboratory, but don’t wear the same mask both inside and outside of the lab. As you do with other laboratory PPE—such as a lab coat and gloves—the mask you wear in the laboratory should be removed when leaving the laboratory.

A face shield may not be used instead of a mask or face covering without advance permission of EHS or the Office for Equal Opportunity Programs. While there is mounting evidence that masks and face coverings provide significant source control, there is no evidence that face shields provide significant source control. Face shields are personal protective equipment (PPE) that can protect the wearer from droplets. Disposable face shields, used by healthcare workers, are relatively expensive and in short supply. Reusable face shields require daily cleaning. Wearing a mask or face covering sets a good example, and they rarely interfere with communication.

Special face coverings are being developed to aid the hearing impaired. Please contact EHS for more information.
Face Shields and Clear Masks

Wearing a mask or face covering sets a good example, and they rarely interfere with communication. However, for some instruction or to aid the hearing impaired, EHS may allow a face shield or clear mask as a substitute for a mask or face covering. In particular, a face shield may not be used instead of a mask or face covering without advance permission of EHS or the Office for Equal Opportunity Programs.

While there is mounting evidence that masks and face coverings provide significant source control, there is no evidence that face shields provide significant source control. Because of this, when EHS permits the use of a face shield without a mask, the wearer should be 12 or more feet distant from others, and the room should be mechanically ventilated. Other downsides to using face shields instead of a mask include:

- Disposable face shields, used by healthcare workers for droplet protection, are relatively expensive and sometimes in short supply.
- Face shields require daily (or more frequent) cleaning.
- Speech can be distorted when a microphone is used with a face shield.

Some Yale instructors have preferred the use of clear masks, although they may require frequent cleaning as well. Use of a clear mask does not require EHS approval. Six-foot distancing from others is sufficient. Other special face coverings are being developed to aid the hearing impaired. Please contact EHS at ehs@yale.edu for more information.

Questions?

For more information about masks, face coverings and respiratory protection, please contact Yale Environmental Health and Safety at ehs@yale.edu or 203-785-3550.

Concerns

For personal health concerns and questions about Yale’s COVID-19 response and policies, you may call 203-432-6604 (toll-free at 866-924-9253). Available 8 am–5 pm, 7 days a week.

If you are comfortable doing so, you may report a concern about compliance with COVID-19 health and safety policies or regulations directly to your staff supervisor, your human resources representative, or a supervising faculty member. You may also make an anonymous or identified report through Yale’s hotline at 877-360-9253, or online at your.yale.edu/hotline. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You may also report a concern or seek additional COVID-19 information by contacting the 2-1-1 Connecticut Hotline.