

Kansas Homemade Mask/Cloth Covering Guide

April 8, 2020

Background

New evidence indicates that some people with coronavirus do not have symptoms of disease and can transmit the virus before getting sick. That means, the virus can spread to others nearby and from you when speaking, coughing or sneezing. To slow the spread of COVID-19, KDHE recommends individuals use cloth face coverings when going out in public.

Do not use surgical masks or N95 masks: These masks are considered specialized personal protective equipment (PPE) and should be reserved for first responders and health care workers to protect from serious injuries or illnesses while doing their jobs. If you have supplies of PPE, consider donating them.

IMPORTANT: Homemade facemasks, if used correctly, are **simply another tool** to help people who may have the virus but don't know it from transmitting it to others. They are **NOT** meant to replace proven public health strategies like **social distancing**, **staying home**, and **practicing good hygiene** – which are all still the best ways to help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

How effective are homemade masks?

Homemade masks, if used correctly, can be effective complement to handwashing, social-distancing and other mitigation measures. They can be another barrier that limits the spread of infectious droplets in the air by containing coughs and sneezes. Primarily, they help protect others from you in the case that you have the virus and don't know it yet.

If you do have symptoms, stay home. A homemade mask **cannot** eliminate the risk of spreading the virus.

When should I wear a mask?

THINK: My Mask Protects You, Your Mask Protects Me to slow the spread of COVID-19

Those who are staying home and have no close contacts who are infected with COVID-19 don't need a mask most of the time. However, wearing a nonmedical or homemade mask may be helpful in certain situations where social distancing can be hard:

- Shopping at essential businesses, like grocery stores or pharmacies;
- While visiting your health care provider;
- Traveling on public transportation;
- Interacting with customers/clients at essential businesses;
- When feeling sick, coughing, or sneezing.

Best Practices for Buying, Making, and Using Homemade Masks Correctly

Making the Mask

- **Buying Materials/Mask:** Consider buying the materials online to avoid exposure in public places. If you are buying a mask, purchase a cloth-based non-medical mask from small businesses. Do not buy medical masks used for healthcare workers.
- **Fabric:** Studies have shown that the best fabric for masks is tightly woven with a thread count of 180 or higher. For example, sheets and dress shirts often have high-thread counts.

Design:

- Use a multi-layer, pleated design.
- The mask should fit snugly around the mouth or nose and should extend well beyond the corners of the mouth.
- Avoid ear loops as they don't give you a good fit and may break down the skin on the ears.
- Don't use a wire in the nose piece because the wire may rust or can poke through the fabric. Consider using a skin friendly tape instead for a better seal – make sure to dispose of it before washing. You could also use a swimmer's nose pincher for the same effect.
- You could add a layer of interfacing between the layers for extra thickness. However, this may make it difficult to breathe, particularly for people who have difficulty breathing.

Putting on the Mask

- Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol content) or soap and water. Never touch the front of the mask.
- Tie the mask above the head, not straight back. Avoid cutting into the ears.

Using the Mask

- Treat the mask as if it always has the virus. Never touch the front of the mask and then touch your face. If you do touch the front of the mask, clean your hands immediately with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol content).
- Do not wear if the mask is damp or wet with spit or mucus.
- Dispose of the mask or wash after every use. Wash the mask daily at a minimum.

Taking off the Mask

- Always remove the mask from behind. Do not touch the front of the mask.

- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after removing the mask.
- Drop it in the wash or dispose of the mask in a closed bin immediately after use.

Remember M.A.S.K

Use this helpful acronym when talking to others about safe homemade mask use:

- **M**ulti-layered, tightly-woven 100% Cotton.
 - Use a thread count of 180 or higher. Don't buy surgical or N95 masks.
- **A**void your face and remove it from behind.
 - Never touch the front of the mask, and always remove it from behind your head.
- **S**crap it if it's damaged, soiled, or doesn't fit.
 - Make sure it's breathable and fits snug. Don't use it while it's damp, wet, or dirty.
- **K**eeep the mask and your hands clean.
 - Wash your hands before you put the mask on/after you take it off. Wash or dispose the mask after every use.

Don't Stop Social Distancing, Practicing Good Hygiene, and Staying Home!

Wearing a mask alone is not effective in reducing transmission of COVID-19. Always:

- Practice social distancing, meaning staying at least 6 feet apart from others when in public or outdoors;
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water is not immediately available;
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow;
- Avoid touching your face;
- Keep your home/surfaces clean;
- Stay home when possible. Only go out if necessary.

How to Make a Homemade Mask out of Fabric or Cloth + Resources:

Materials needed:

- Fabric (100% cotton is most effective) (outer layer and a liner) such as that used in dress shirts quilt tops
- Fabric Ties (folded strips or bias tape) (Figure 1)
- Scissors
- Sewing machine or a needle and thread

Instructions:

- Measure and cut fabric in a rectangle 6 inches by 9 inches, (standard for adults);
- Align the outer and liner fabrics with right sides facing (Figure 2)
- Sew a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam on completely on one 9-inch side and on the other side, leaving a 3-inch opening to turn the piece inside out. (Figure 3)
- Insert and pin the 4 fabric ties in each corner along the 6-inch sides with the main part of the tie inside the “sandwich” (Figure 4)
- Sew a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam along both 6-inch sides including the fabric ties; stitching extra over the ties to secure
- Turn the piece inside out; the ties will be out in the corners; topstitch around the edges of the piece. That closes the opening used for turning out (Figure 5)
- Create 2 pleats across the mask and pin (Figure 6)
- Top stitch all around the mask, securing the pleats and closing the opening (Figure 7)
- Press

Figure 1

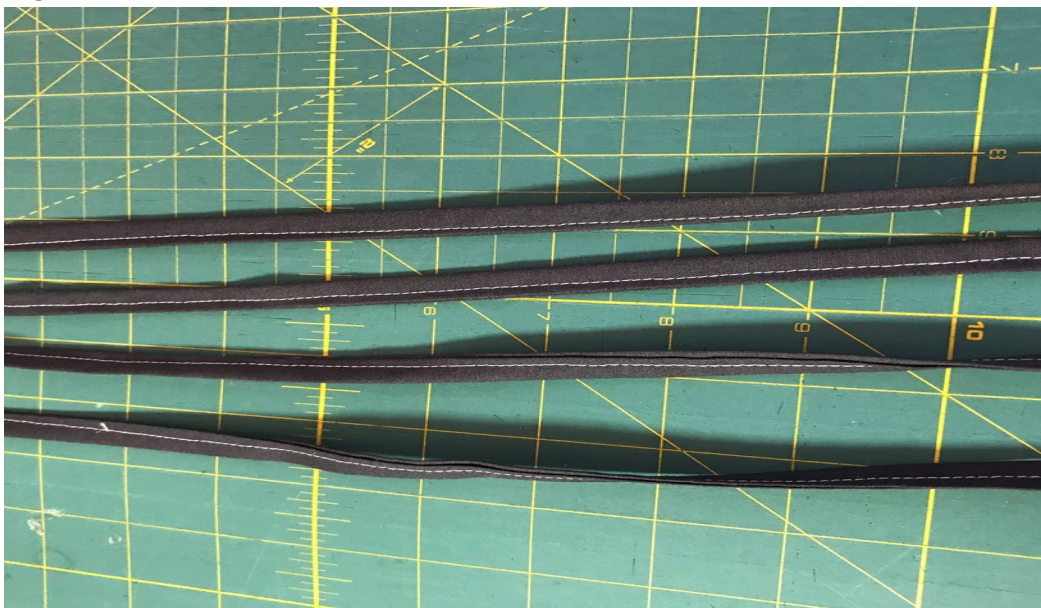


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Resources:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/article/how-to-make-face-mask-coronavirus.html>
- <https://soeasilydistracted.com/home/15-diy-homemade-face-masks-patterns-and-tutorials/>
- <https://www.missouriquiltco.com/msgc/tutorial/DIY-face-mask>

Guidance has been adapted from the Pennsylvania Department of Health (document can be found [here](#)).

