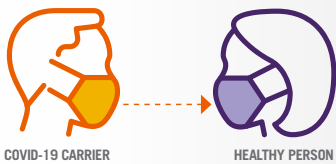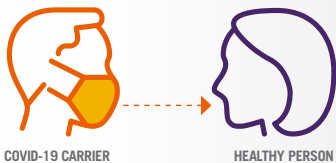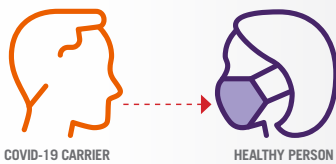# How Masks Reduce Risk

COVID-19 spreads mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. To reduce the spread, you should wear a mask in public settings, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
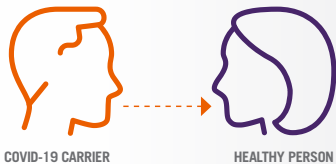
COVID-19 CARRIER → **HEALTHY PERSON**

RISK **VERY LOW**

COVID-19 CARRIER → **HEALTHY PERSON**

RISK **LOW**

COVID-19 CARRIER → **HEALTHY PERSON**

RISK **MODERATE**

COVID-19 CARRIER → **HEALTHY PERSON**

RISK **HIGH**

Masks Types and When to Wear Them

Cloth masks
Wear in the community and at work.

Store bought or homemade:
- Can be made from various types of machine-washable and dryable cloth.
- If homemade, use clean woven cotton or linen e.g., a tea towel, pillowcase, t-shirt.
- Need to cover the mouth and nose without big spaces or gaps.

Medical masks
For use by healthcare workers and caregivers.

Surgical masks (wear in the community and at work):
- Flat/pleated or cup shaped with a looser fit.
- Meant for one-time use.

Medical N95 respirators (not for general use):
- Reserve PPE for working with sick clients.
- N95s protect against inhaling and exhaling very small droplets.

Industrial N95 respirators or masks with valves

Not recommended to prevent COVID-19.

- Many places will not let you in if you are wearing a valved mask, including classrooms and Prometrics testing sites.
- Valves only provide one-way protection.

Protects you
incoming air is filtered.

Does not protect others
outgoing air not filtered.

How to Properly Wear and Care for your Mask

✓ **Wash your hands before and after touching mask.**

✗ Don't touch your mask while it is being worn.

✓ **Touch only the bands or ties when putting on and taking off mask.**

✗ Don't remove your mask around others in public.

✓ **Make sure the mask covers your nose, mouth and chin.**

✗ Don't leave your nose or mouth exposed.

✓ **Make sure you can breathe and talk through your mask comfortably.**

✗ Don't pull your mask down to speak.

✓ **Wash cloth masks after each use.**
- Wash immediately after wearing.
- Wash with hot water in the washing machine or scrub by hand with soap for 20 seconds.
- Tumble dry on high heat.
- Store fresh masks in a clean place.

✗ Don't reuse disposable masks, they cannot be cleaned and should be thrown away.

#WeGotThisCovered