Types of Masks to Protect Against **COVID-19**

The Benefits of Masking

COVID-19 spreads through droplets and particles released into the air when you breathe, talk, cough, or sneeze. Respirators or face masks help prevent the virus from spreading, especially in places with a mix of vaccinated and unvaccinated people.

People often wonder why mask regulations keep changing. Many factors go into mask recommendations, including the infection rate in the area, new variants that spread quickly and the setting (such as crowded indoor areas).

Not everyone will have access to the type of masks that they need to stay safe. Connect with your local Center for Independent Living (CIL) to find out ways to get the mask you need:

Summit Independent Living Center
Phone: (406) 215-1604

Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow (LIFTT)
Phone: (406) 259-5181
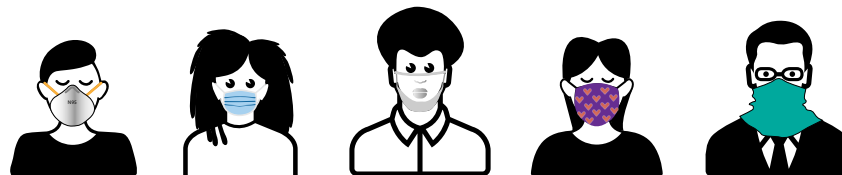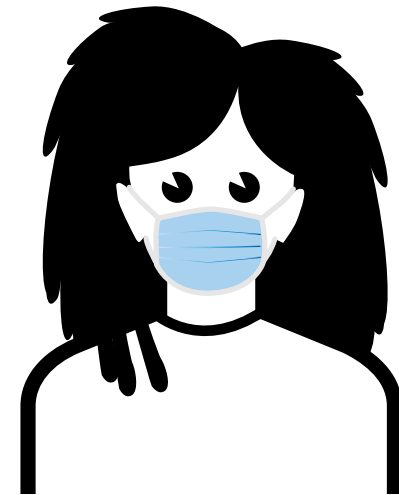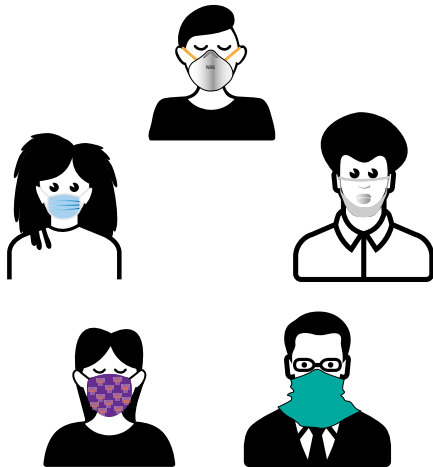
When choosing a mask, it is important to pick one that fits you well.

Make sure:

- Your mask fits snugly over your nose, mouth, and chin.

- There are no gaps around the outside edges of the mask.

- No air flows through from the top or the sides of the mask.

N95 and Other Respirators

N95 and KN95 respirators offer **the highest level of protection**. Respirators are made to protect you by filtering the air you breathe, and protect others by capturing droplets and particles so you do not spread them to others.

Procedural and Surgical Masks

Medical grade surgical or procedural masks provide good protection due to their filtration and fluid resistance.
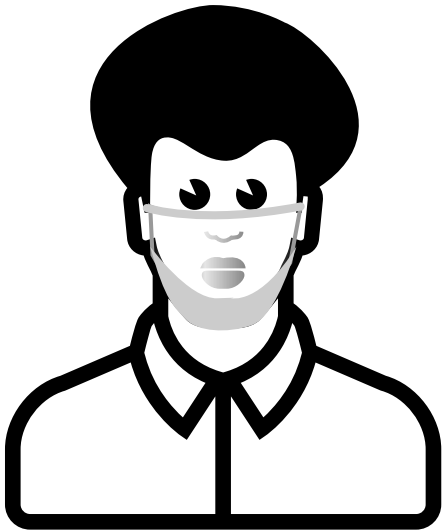
Transparent Medical Masks

Transparent medical masks are surgical masks with a piece of clear plastic in front of one's mouth. They allow others to see your mouth and lips when access to facial expressions and lipreading is necessary.

Multi-Layered Cloth Masks

Multi-layered cloth masks can provide some protection if they are worn consistently and properly.

Neck Gaiters and Bandanas

Neck gaiters and bandanas are not to be confused with cloth masks. These types of face coverings **do not work as a proper face mask**.