



**NEVADA
HEALTH
RESPONSE**

Nevada Medical Advisory Team:
What does the science say about face coverings?

- Research is still being conducted on whether improvised facial coverings prevent exposure to COVID-19, but it has been established that face coverings can reduce the spread of the virus from infected symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals.
- People can be contagious before the onset of symptoms. Proper coverage of the nose and mouth is a critical component in decreasing the risk of spreading or contracting COVID-19. (Anifinrud, Stadnytski, Bax & Bax, 2020)
- People who are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic can spread the virus and, when combined with social distancing and other preventative measures, face coverings can offer additional protection to the public. Face coverings protect both the wearer and individuals the wearer may interact with either directly or indirectly while in a public space. (Davies, 2020)
- Even with a face covering, it is still important to maintain social distancing and good hand hygiene protocols. These efforts, in combination with face covering when you have to go out in public, are shown to help slow the spread of COVID-19.
- COVID-19 is highly contagious and while the science is not yet definitive, and we are learning more each day, facial coverings reduce the chance of transmission and protect everyone against infection. (MacIntyre, Zhang & Chughtai, 2016)
- The face covering must cover the nose and mouth and it is important that the wearer does not touch their face covering, as the virus could be transferred to their hands. (CDC)

- The main role of a face covering is to reduce the release of infectious particles into the air when a person speaks, coughs, or sneezes. While no one single intervention offers complete protection, -when combined with proper handwashing, social distancing and staying home when sick, face coverings can reduce the spread of COVID-19 in communities. (CDC)
- The current evidence suggests that COVID-19 is most commonly spread by respiratory droplets, especially when people cough and sneeze, entering through the eyes, nose, and mouth, either directly or by touching a contaminated surface. The risk of contracting COVID-19 is reduced when both the infected person, and those around them, are wearing a face covering. (Anifinrud, Stadnytski, Bax & Bax, 2020)
- A study the spread of COVID19 show that if only 50 percent of a population wears a face covering, it will not be sufficient to prevent continue spread, and that if 80 percent of a population donned a face covering, there's a substantial reduction in infection. (Kai, Goldstein, Morgunov, Nangalia, Rotkirch, 2020)

Sources:

[Anfinrud P, Stadnytski V, Bax CE, Bax A. 2020 Visualizing Speech-Generated Oral Fluid Droplets with Laser Light Scattering. New England Journal of Medicine \(doi: 10.1056/NEJMc2007800\)](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMc2007800)

[Davies A et al. 2013 Testing the efficacy of homemade masks: would they protect in an influenza pandemic?. Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness \(doi: 10.1017/dmp.2013.43\).](https://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2013.43)

[Kai, Goldstein, Morgunov, Nangalia, Rotkirch, et al. 2020 Universal Masking is Urgent in the COVID-19 Pandemic: SEIR and Agent Based Models, Empirical Validation, Policy Recommendations, arXiv:2004.13553 \[physics.soc-ph\]](https://arxiv.org/abs/2004.13553)

[MacIntyre C, Zhang Y, Chughtai A, et al. 2016. Cluster randomised controlled trial to examine medical mask use as source control for people with respiratory illness. BMJ Open \(doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2016-012330\)](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2016-012330)