



Scientific Brief: Community Use of Cloth Masks to Control Spread of SARS-CoV-2

Experimental and epidemiological data support community masking to reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2. The prevention benefit of masking is derived from the combination of source control and personal protection for the mask wearer.



SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) is transmitted predominately by respiratory droplets generated when people cough, sneeze, sing, talk, or breathe. CDC recommends community use of masks, specifically non-valved multi-layer cloth masks, to prevent transmission of SARS-CoV-2. Experimental and epidemiological data support community masking to reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

Masks are primarily intended as "source control" to reduce the emission of virus-laden droplets. This is especially relevant for asymptomatic or presymptomatic individuals who feel well and may be unaware they are infectious. These cases are estimated to account for more than 50% of transmissions. Masks also help provide personal protection for the wearer by reducing the likelihood of inhaling infectious droplets. The community benefit of masking for SARS-CoV-2 control is due to the combination of these effects. As the number of people using masks consistently and correctly increases, so does the individual prevention benefit.

CDC has published a summary of this science and will update it as additional science becomes available. Read the full brief: ["Scientific Brief: Community Use of Cloth Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2"](#)

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