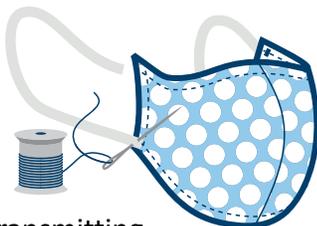


The Difference Between Alternative Masks and Surgical Masks for COVID-19

What is it?

Alternative Masks



- Non-FDA-regulated masks, including homemade masks.
- May reduce the likelihood of transmitting the virus by the wearer, but they are not proven to protect health care staff or patients.

Who wears it?

- Asymptomatic people.

How it works

- **Protects other people** by reducing the amount of respiratory droplets expelled by a person who may be infected but not showing signs of illness.

Limitations

- Not regulated and do not protect the wearer.
- Not to be used by people who are sick.
- Breathing into a facemask builds up moisture, which can be uncomfortable to wear.
- Need to be regularly washed and sanitized.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it; if you do touch it, wash hands thoroughly.

Disposal

- During disposal, avoid touching the mask and wash hands thoroughly afterward.

Surgical Masks



- FDA-regulated masks that are fluid resistant and provide the wearer protection against large droplets, splashes, or sprays of bodily or other hazardous fluids.

- Health care staff during the evaluation of and care for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients.

- Protects the wearer by creating a barrier to the virus or body fluid that may contain the virus.

- Due to high demand, supply may be limited.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it; if you do touch it, wash hands thoroughly.
- Do not wash the mask.
- Reuse of facemasks may be limited by the type of fastening (e.g., elastic ear hooks may be more robust than ties that are more liable to tearing).
- Discard when it becomes damaged or deformed; becomes wet or visibly dirty; breathing becomes difficult; or if it becomes contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids.

- Should be donned and doffed appropriately.
- During disposal, avoid touching the mask and wash hands thoroughly afterward.