

Use of Face Coverings to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

The most important way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 is by staying home as much as possible and staying at least six feet apart from others when in a community setting. The CDC and VDH recommend wearing a face covering over your mouth and nose when it may be difficult to distance, as it is possible to spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. **To reduce spread of COVID-19, the UVA Research Community is expected to wear [face coverings](#) when inside UVA buildings.**

Many members of the University community have already purchased or made their own personal face coverings, and you are encouraged to provide your own face covering wherever possible. The University is working to obtain cloth face coverings for personnel who need them, and a limited supply of disposable face coverings is currently available. Research department managers can request disposable face coverings through UVA Environmental Health & Safety. Non-research departments should contact UVA Emergency Management to request disposable face coverings.

There are instances where it is not required or may not be appropriate to wear a face covering:

- When a person is in a personal office (a single room with a closable door) and others are not present and coworkers do not regularly visit
- Individuals who have been advised by a medical professional not to wear a face covering due to trouble breathing, being incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance. In such instances, contact your HR manager to arrange for accommodation.
- Instances where wearing a face covering creates a safety hazard at work under established health and safety guidelines. For example, performing procedures where a surgical mask is required as PPE to protect the individual from exposure to potentially harmful materials, a cloth face covering should not be worn; instead, use a disposable surgical mask. Similarly, consideration should be given to the appropriateness of cloth face coverings in environments where flame resistant materials are employed for safety.
- While eating or drinking

For clarity, wearing a face covering is only one tool for reducing the spread of COVID-19, and doing so is not a substitute for physical distancing of at least six feet, and frequent hand washing.

For additional information on wearing a face covering, donning, doffing, storage, laundering, and disposal, refer to [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov). Contact your supervisor or UVA Environmental Health and Safety (ehs.virginia.edu) with questions.