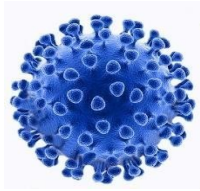


Fix your Fit!



The use of face coverings continues to be required at all times on Columbia campuses, both indoors and out, and regardless of personal vaccination status. At this point in the pandemic, it is well known that widespread use of face coverings is important in reducing community spread of COVID-19. Not all face coverings are created equal, and some are better than others. Moreover, a properly-fitted mask improves your protection against exposure to COVID-19, and improves the protection of those around you from your own respiratory secretions. This Fact Sheet provides techniques and tips to all University personnel on achieving the best fit for your face covering.

Face Covering Basics



All face coverings must cover the mouth and nose at all times. Keep your mask on at all times when on campus, except when alone in a private, closed office or room, with the door closed, or when eating and drinking, while safely distanced from others. Do not pull the mask down from over your nose, or worse, below your chin. Keep a spare mask handy, and change your mask when soiled or wet.

Improving Fit to Protect Yourself and Others

A well-fitting mask contains respiratory droplets better than a loose-fitting mask, and likewise, better protects the wearer from breathing in the respiratory secretions of others.

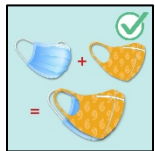
[CDC recommends](#)¹ several methods to improve the fit of reusable cloth masks, disposable surgical masks, and other types of face coverings:



Use a mask with a nose wire – A properly crimped and fitted nose wire holds the mask snugly against the face and provides a better seal, both in and out. As a bonus, the nose wire will help prevent fogging of glasses!



Consider a mask brace or fitter – Worn over a mask, a brace or fitter pulls the mask snugly against the face creating a better seal to keep air out, and to filter exhaled air.



Double-up, or add layers – Two or more layers are better than one! Always choose a multi-layer mask, and consider wearing a reusable cloth mask over a disposable mask, to pull the mask closer to the face and eliminate gaps. **Note** – DO NOT wear two surgical masks over one another as this does not improve fit or performance. Finally, KN95 masks are designed to be worn alone and should not be combined with an additional face covering, over or under the mask.

Knot and Tuck – The “knot and tuck” technique aims to remove the loose side gaps that commonly occur when wearing a disposable mask. To improve mask fit by utilizing the knot and tuck technique:

- Knot the ear loops where they join the edge of the mask
- Fold and tuck the unneeded material under the edges
- For video instructions, see: <https://youtu.be/UANi8Cc71A0>

