

MASK & FACE COVERING GUIDANCE from the HAMILTON BOARD of HEALTH

One of the most important means of helping protect yourself, your family, and friends and others from becoming infected with Covid-19 is by using proper face covering. Remember, even a person who shows no symptoms of illness may still be able to spread Covid-19. Governor Baker's Order #55 requires you to wear a mask or face cloth covering over your nose and mouth at all times in any public location whether indoors or outdoors.

When you wear a cloth mask, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health recommends it:

- Cover your nose and mouth,
- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face,
- Be secured with ties or ear loops,
- Include multiple layers of fabric,
- Allow for breathing without restriction, and
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

When putting on and taking off a mask, do not touch the front of it; you should only handle the ties or ear straps. Current DPH and CDC **guidance does NOT endorse the use of “neck gaiters”** because (1) they have no ear loops or ties, (2) they typically consist of only a single layer, and (3) the wearer usually removes and refits them by touching/pulling them down/up from the front.

Remember to wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after touching the mask and wash the mask regularly. Cloth masks should not be placed on children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

A final note: Public health experts emphasize that proper mask use is just one way to help reduce the spread of Covid-19. Social distancing (staying a minimum of six feet from others), maximizing indoor ventilation, and hand hygiene are also very important. None of these, in itself, is 100% effective. However, when we combine them, we can make a big contribution to controlling this pandemic.