



## Message to 4-H and Youth Educators

April 2020

This activity is being offered and encouraged as a service project for youth to actively support their communities during this public health crisis. We are first encouraging them to make cloth face coverings for their families. Then, when they feel more confident in making the face coverings, they may choose to make more for community members, groups, and institutions.

When possible, to avoid adding yet another burden to the places that care for the sick, the elderly, the incarcerated, and others, we recommend helping to organize a coordinated approach to gathering information about the need in the community. If you can help find out answers to the questions below and share it with youth volunteers, please do so. If you can involve youth leaders in helping to gather and share this information, that is even better.

Think about places in your community where people must live or work in close contact with others—nursing homes, residential facilities, jails, prisons, juvenile facilities, etc.—and healthcare settings where homemade cloth face coverings may be used for patients. Find out if someone in your community is coordinating donations. Here are some questions to ask before starting the project:

- Does the institution need homemade, washable cloth face coverings?
- What design requirements do they have for cloth face coverings (fabric, ties or elastic, design, etc.)?
- How many does the institution need?
- What is a safe way to make donations to the institution?
- Is there anything else volunteers need to know about making a donation?

In the interest of social distancing, we are NOT encouraging 4-H and Youth Educators to act as collection points for donation. Some communities have neutral collection points in places like grocery stores or pharmacies. Please do what you can to find out what is already available in your community. If there is nothing, encourage youth and their families to follow the instructions of the individual institutions for how they can safely receive donations.

### **CDC Recommendation on Use of Homemade Cloth Face Coverings:**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public places where it's hard to follow social distancing recommendations. Examples include grocery stores and pharmacies. This practice is especially important where community spread is happening.

CDC says that the use of simple cloth face coverings helps to slow the spread of the virus. Wearing these face coverings helps prevent those who do not know they have the virus from transmitting it to others. Voluntarily wearing cloth face coverings made at home is one way people can help everyone when they need to go to public places.

Cloth face coverings should not be put on young children under age 2. Also avoid putting them on anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies, reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance. (Guidance current as of April 5, 2020. Please check for updates at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>)

As a reminder, face coverings do not replace recommended prevention strategies including 6-feet social distancing, good hand hygiene, covering mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and cleaning high-touch surfaces. Please continue these and other recommended (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>) prevention practices even when face coverings are used.

Thank you, in advance, for your support of youth volunteers and your communities! Take care and stay healthy.

Sincerely,  
Wisconsin 4-H



UW-MADISON EXTENSION

**Goals:**

Using basic sewing skills to sew reusable cloth face coverings to help prevent the spread of disease.

**Life Skills:**

- Concern for others
- Contributing to a Group Effort
- Disease Prevention

**Grade Levels:**

3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up

**Length of Experience:**

30-40 minutes

**Supplies Needed:**

- Tight-woven cotton and/or cotton flannel fabric
- 1/4" wide elastic
- Thread
- Scissors
- Pins
- Sewing machine

**Do Ahead:**

- Print/make copies of pattern
- Print provided resource cards to attach to finished face coverings.

**Sources:**

Adapted by Dawn VandeVoort, Door County Extension 4-H Youth Development Educator, from The Turban Project's How to Sew a Medical Face Mask ([www.facebook.com/turbanproject](http://www.facebook.com/turbanproject)) and JOANN's How to Make a Face Mask video tutorial ([www.joann.com/make-to-give-response](http://www.joann.com/make-to-give-response)). Health recommendations sourced from the Centers for Disease Control (<https://www.cdc.gov/>) at the links provided.

# Cloth Face Coverings

## Activity Plan

**BACKGROUND**

During times of disease outbreak, preventing the accidental spread of a virus helps protect everyone. The health care workers and staff at residential care facilities and other places where people must live close together, are especially in need of help keeping themselves and their residents safe and protected.

Making a protective face covering is a good way to shield ourselves and others from spreading germs or viruses and a great way to practice basic sewing skills to help others. We can use our basic sewing skills and a few simple supplies to create an item that is important to keeping us and others safe and healthy.

**Learning Through Service**

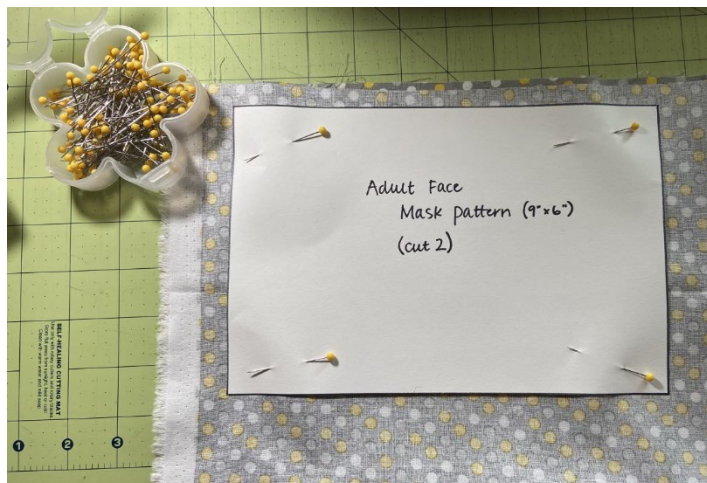
You may want to start by making face coverings for members of your family who want or may need them. When you feel confident in making them, it is time to find out who else may need them.

Think about places in your community where people must live or work in close contact with others—nursing homes, residential facilities, jails, prisons, juvenile facilities, etc.—and healthcare settings where homemade face coverings may be used for patients. Find out if someone in your community is coordinating donations of cloth face coverings. If you are not sure how to find out, start with your local Extension educator. Here are some of the kinds of things it is important to know before making cloth face coverings to donate:

- Does the institution need homemade, washable face coverings?
- What design requirements do they have for cloth face coverings (fabric, ties or elastic, design, etc.)?
- How many cloth face coverings does the institution need?
- What is a safe way to make donations to the institution?
- Is there anything else we need to know about making a donation?

## ACTIVITY

1. Prepare fabric and elastic—using the template (included with this lesson). Cut two pieces of fabric (Choosing tight-woven cotton fabrics, these can be both cotton; one cotton and one cotton flannel; or both cotton flannel). Cut two pieces of elastic that are 7" long (use the line on the pattern marked "elastic").
2. Place fabric right sides together. On the short ends, place the ends of the elastic (as shown in the photo) in the corners between the layers of fabric.



3. Pin the layers together, securing the elastic pieces in the layers.

4. Sew the layers together. Sew around the outside edges, using a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. When you get to the corners, use your sewing machine's "reverse" feature to back up and reinforce the stitching. Then go forward to the corner. Pivot the needle at the corner, go forward 4-5 stitches, then reverse 4-5 stitches back to reinforce the corner again. Then proceed forward along that side. Make sure to leave a small opening (about 2 inches) to be able to turn the fabrics right side out.



5. Turn fabrics right side out through the opening in your stitching. Gently turn the layers right side out, and tug gently on the elastic pieces to get all the seams flat.





6. Flatten the fabrics, using your hands to smooth out the pieces.
7. Where your fabric opening is located, fold the edges inside and place a pin through the fabric to close the opening. You will sew this shut in the next step.



8. Making the tucks in the ends—This part can be a little tricky. Ask someone for help if needed to make the tucks. You will need to make three small tucks on each short end. It is easiest to start with the middle tuck. First, find the midpoint of the side using a ruler and pins. When you find the middle of that piece, mark it with a pin and fold it over about 1/2 inch. Secure it with a pin (see picture for example).

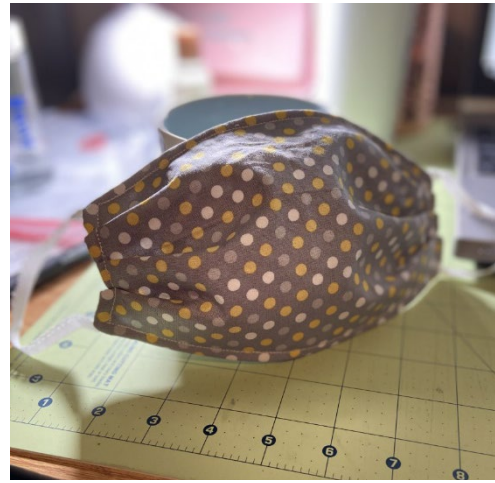


9. When you have created the middle tuck, create two more tucks, one on each side of the middle one. When you have created all three tucks on one side, your cloth face covering should look like the image below on the left.

Repeat this process on the other end, making sure that the tucks are going in the same direction so it looks like the image below on the right.



10. When the tucks are all pinned in place, it is time to topstitch around the entire covering to secure the tucks and close the opening. Sew around the edge using a 1/4-inch seam allowance, removing pins as you come to them. Make sure that the elastic stays free and does not get caught in your topstitching. Once you have sewn around the edge once, you may wish to sew around again as an added level of support and strength.



## REFLECT AND APPLY

During your project or after your project, think about these questions:

- How did you feel while helping with this project?
- What were your favorite parts of this project?
- What are some other ways you can use your sewing skills to support your community? What are other projects that you can do with these skills to help others?
- In addition to cloth face coverings, what are some other ways we can help prevent the spread of disease and viruses?
- What does this project mean to you? Why is it important to help with projects like these?

## EXPLORE MORE

- What could you do to learn more about what is needed in your community? Think about organizations that help people where you live. What are they doing to help people right now? Are there ways you can help while staying safe and healthy?
- What if you learn there is a need for larger or smaller cloth face coverings than the ones you learned to make here? Think about how you might change the pattern to make it work for larger or smaller people. This is a way to practice adapting sewing patterns to fit other sizes of people.
- Some institutions may need a certain kind of face covering that is different from this pattern. After you find out what they need, how could you adapt or change this pattern to use different kinds of fabric or ties or other things they might need? What have you learned about sewing cloth face coverings that will help you follow a different pattern?
- **For youth in grades 9 and higher:** A stigma is the disapproval or discrimination against a person based on a characteristic that may seem to separate them from other parts of society. Use the Internet to learn more about how wearing cloth face coverings may have a stigma attached to it for some religious, racial, and/or cultural groups. If a person wears a cloth face covering in public places to protect themselves and others from viruses, how might members of some groups feel stigmatized for covering their faces in this way? Why might they feel unsafe because of that stigma? If almost everyone wears a cloth face covering, how would that change any stigma attached to wearing them?



Elastic- 7"



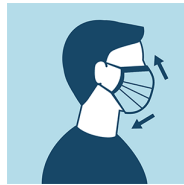
Adult Cloth  
Face Covering  
Pattern (9" x 6")

(cut 2)



**Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

How to Protect Yourself and Others:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>



### How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering

Cloth face coverings should—

- 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
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

Recommendations and image sourced from "Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19." Visit link to view current recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>



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