Why, When, and How to Use a Mask

Why wear a mask:
You can transmit COVID-19 coronavirus even if you don’t feel sick. Some people can be contagious without even knowing that they have COVID-19.

When to use a mask:
• If you need to go to buy food or medicines
• If you have to go to work (essential workers)
• If you live or work in a group setting (shelter, group home)

_Do not_ wear a mask in order to hang out with friends or neighbors. Stay home.
You don’t need a mask to go for a walk, run, or bike ride alone or with someone else you live with as long as you stay at least 6 feet from others who are outside.

How to use a mask
• Use cloth face coverings, not surgical masks or N95 respirators
• You can _make a mask at home_ with common items you already have.
• Make sure your mask fits well around the mouth and nose without any gaps at the sides.
• Use 2-3 layers of close-fitting fabric.
• Choose a mask that is comfortable enough for you to keep it on whenever you are in public places. Make sure you can breathe easily while wearing it.
• _Consider the outside of the mask to be dirty:_ avoid touching the mask while in use and wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after removing or adjusting the mask.
• Put your cloth mask in the laundry whenever it is wet or soiled and at the end of each day.
  o Fabric face masks can be washed with ordinary detergent and do not have to be separated from other laundry.
• Cloth face coverings should _not_ be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unable to remove the mask without assistance.
• _Face shields_ can be worn with cloth masks for those who want additional protection or instead of cloth masks for those who are uncomfortable breathing in a mask.