

Quality Control Guidelines for Hospital Masks

BE SURE TO...

- Use clean, 100% cotton fabric only (florals, geometrics, college/national sports teams, solids, fun prints, happy prints)
- Use elastic that is 1/8" or 1/4" wide, when possible; Dollar Store elastic headbands that fall within these measurements are acceptable
- Use either cotton or polyester thread and a size 80/12 sewing machine needle
- Press your fabric with a steam iron on a cotton setting before cutting your 9" wide by 6" tall mask pieces
- Use a rotary cutter and a cutting mat if available for the cleanest & quickest cuts
- Whenever possible, use two different coordinating fabrics for each mask (so that healthcare workers will be able to identify which side they are wearing against their skin when they remove & replace them, so as not to contaminate themselves)
- Use a 1/4" seam allowance when assembling the front and the back pieces
- Begin AND end all stitching with securing stitches using your reverse button/lever
- Use a stitch length between 2-1/4 to 2-1/2 (computerized machines will read 2.25-2.50)
- Do your best to sew an accurate 1/4" seam allowance—if you have a specific presser foot that's marked as a 1/4" foot (also known as a "piecing foot" for quilting) it's best to use that
- When sewing over the elastic, be sure to reverse stitch over it a few times to secure it
- Trim the excess fabric at the corners before turning your mask right side out (be careful not to clip your stitching!)
- After turning your mask right side out, gently poke out any ruffled corners with your finger, a chopstick, an unsharpened pencil, etc. to make your corners sharper
- Take your time to press (iron) your mask flat before making your pleats and tuck the fabric of your opening to the inside, aligning it to get a nice, straight edge. Press it down well.
- When your pleats are made and you are ready to topstitch the mask, use a seam allowance slightly SMALLER than 1/4" so that you can close the opening you made at the bottom
- Take your time with your topstitching to obtain a neat and straight seam
- Stitch down the right and left sides a second time to secure the pleats—stitch right on top of your first topstitching line
- Be sure to trim ALL thread ends or loops that you find—you must trim on BOTH sides of the mask
- After all thread ends are trimmed, give your mask a final press with the iron to make crisp pleats

AVOID AT ALL COSTS...

- Using flannel or polyester fabrics
- Using old cotton fabric that's been stored for years, any holiday-themed fabric, nursery prints, skull & crossbones, anything inappropriate or downright u-g-l-y
- Taking shortcuts or modifying the CDC-approved pattern
- Skipping any of the guidelines above

