



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April 4, 2020

### CLOTH MASKS – WHO’S PROTECTED

*A MESSAGE FROM DR. LAURA BUTHOD, MEDICAL ADVISOR FOR THE McHENRY COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH*

**WOODSTOCK** – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released new recommendations Friday for the voluntary use of non-medical masks. They suggest cloth face coverings be used in public settings where other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

Wearing anything over your mouth and nose will protect others by decreasing the spread of respiratory droplets to some degree. The healthcare respirators that have been tested and approved for use are the best at preventing transmission of germs. These need to be reserved for our healthcare workers and first responders to keep them safe so they can continue to help us.

The key messages continue to be to stay home except for essential tasks, wash your hands, and frequently clean surfaces. If you must go to the grocery store or work, and you are well, using a homemade mask or bandana will help protect others. Use of these masks however, does not mean you are safe from germs around you. Keep your 6 feet distancing from others, use your hand sanitizers, and don't touch the mask or any part of your face. If you have any symptoms, you must stay home. These coverings will not keep you from spreading illness to the vulnerable folks in our community who are at higher risk for hospitalization and death.

It is reasonable to use homemade facemasks when in the community, but you must know how to use them correctly. Good hand hygiene should be performed before putting on a mask, and after touching, adjusting, or removing a mask. Facemasks should be removed and discarded if soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through.

The Minnesota Department of Health suggests some design principles for making and using alternative facemasks:

1. Build a mask that tightly encloses the area around the nose and mouth, from the bridge of the nose down to the chin, and extending onto the cheek beyond the corners of the mouth, so no gaps occur when talking or moving.

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2. Use mask material that is tightly woven but breathable. Possibly double-layer the fabric. Masks must be made from washable material such as fabric. Choose a fabric that can handle high temperatures and bleach without shrinking or otherwise deforming.

3. The mask should be tolerant of expected amounts of moisture from breathing.

If interested, you can check out the following links for further information:

Providence St. Joseph Health: [How to sew a simple Fabric Face Mask](#)

Allina Health Face Mask Directions: [How to make a facemask](#)

Please consider donating any much needed personal protective equipment (PPE) to your local fire and police departments. If you have made homemade masks that you would like to donate, please call the Senior Care Volunteer Network at 815-455-3120 or email [laura@scvnmchenrycounty.org](mailto:laura@scvnmchenrycounty.org).

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