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Communicable Disease Unit

[scph.org/cdu](http://scph.org/cdu)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Akron, Ohio – As we move forward with reopening businesses in Ohio, Summit County Public Health (SCPH) strongly recommends that residents wear cloth face coverings at all times when in public settings. We as residents of Summit County **must** do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. Although the Governors Orders do not require customers to wear face coverings, it is **strongly recommended** that you wear a face covering while out in public unless you have a valid health reason to not wear one. Many people who are infected with COVID-19 have no symptoms, so Summit County residents should wear cloth face coverings as a way to protect others from possible infection. Face coverings with other social distancing practices and frequent hand washing significantly reduce the chances of spreading COVID-19 to others.

SCPH is recommending that Summit County retailers opening on May 12, 2020 develop specific advertised shopping hours for customers who are unable to wear a face covering while shopping. Preferably at the end of the day before the final disinfection of hard surfaces takes place. This would allow customers who prefer to be around other customers who are wearing face coverings the opportunity to avoid shopping during those hours.

The Centers For Disease Control and Infection (CDC) recommends the use of cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19. The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings in those areas where there is significant community spread and where social distancing is difficult to maintain such as stores. It is important to remember, wearing a cloth face covering is not intended to protect the wearer, but it may prevent the spread of virus from the wearer to others.

Cloth face coverings should:

- Fit tightly but comfortably to the side of your face.
- Wear horizontally, covering nose, mouth, and chin at all times, and secure behind the head with ties or ear loops. Wash your hands before putting the face covering on and immediately after removing it, and don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth when taking it off.
- Be constructed from multiple layers of cotton fabric.
- Allow for adequate breathing without restriction.
- Be able to be washed and machine dried without damage. Make sure the mask is totally dry before wearing.
- Visit <https://bit.ly/2zLpz3v> or <https://bit.ly/3bTc5Ro> for information on making your own cloth face coverings.

Cloth face coverings should not be used for children under the age of 2 years, individuals who are unconscious, having trouble breathing or are unable to remove the face covering





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without assistance. The cloth face coverings that the CDC is recommending are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. These items are in short supply and must be saved for those healthcare workers and first responders who are on the front lines leading the fight against COVID-19.

Along with the cloth face coverings, it still remains important to continue to follow standard precautions to prevent the spread of infectious disease. Steps that residents can take to slow the spread of the virus include:

- **Maintain a six-foot distance** from other individuals.
- **Wash your cloth face cover routinely in the washing machine.**
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes** with your elbow or sleeve, or a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands afterwards.
- **Washing your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds**, especially after going to the bathroom or before eating. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Avoid touching your face** – especially your eyes, nose and mouth – with unwashed hands.
- **Stay home if you have cold- or flu-like symptoms**, for seven days after your illness onset or three days after your fever resolves without fever reducing medicine, and avoid close contact with people who are sick.

For more information about the coronavirus situation in Summit County visit <https://www.scph.org/covid-19>. If you have questions, call the COVID-19 Call Line at (330) 926-5795. The call line is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. M-F.

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