

# Who Should Not Wear a Cloth Face Covering

Cloth face coverings should **not** be worn by:

- Children younger than 2 years old
- **Anyone who has trouble breathing**
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance

## Feasibility and Adaptations

CDC recognizes that wearing cloth face coverings may not be possible in every situation or for some people. In some situations, wearing a cloth face covering may exacerbate a physical or mental health condition, lead to a medical emergency, or introduce significant safety concerns. Adaptations and alternatives should be considered whenever possible to increase the feasibility of wearing a cloth face covering or to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading if it is not possible to wear one.

For example,

- **People who are deaf or hard of hearing—or those who care for or interact with a person who is hearing impaired—may be unable to wear cloth face coverings if they rely on lipreading to communicate.** In this situation, consider using a clear face covering. If a clear face covering isn't available, consider whether you can use written communication, use closed captioning, or decrease background noise to make communication possible while wearing a cloth face covering that blocks your lips.
- **Some people, such as people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health conditions or other sensory sensitivities,** may have challenges wearing a cloth face covering. They should consult with their healthcare provider for advice about wearing cloth face coverings.
- Younger children (e.g., preschool or early elementary aged) may be unable to wear a cloth face covering properly, particularly for an extended period of time. Wearing of cloth face coverings may be prioritized at times when it is difficult to maintain a distance of 6 feet from others (e.g., during carpool drop off or pick up, or when standing in line at school). Ensuring proper cloth face covering size and fit and providing children with frequent reminders and education on the importance and proper wear of cloth face coverings may help address these issues.
- People should not wear cloth face coverings while engaged in activities that may cause the cloth face covering to become wet, like when [swimming at the beach or pool](#). A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe. For activities like swimming, it is particularly important to maintain physical distance from others when in the water.
- **People who are engaged in high intensity activities, like running,** may not be able to wear a cloth face covering if it causes difficulty breathing. If unable to wear a cloth face covering, consider conducting the activity in a location with greater ventilation and air exchange (for instance, outdoors versus indoors) and where it is possible to maintain physical distance from others.
- **People who work in a setting where cloth face coverings may increase the risk of heat-related illness or cause safety concerns due to introduction of a hazard** (for instance, straps getting caught in machinery) may consult with an occupational safety and health professional to determine the appropriate face covering for their setting. Outdoor workers may prioritize use of cloth face coverings when in close contact with other people, like during group travel or shift meetings, and remove face coverings when social distancing is possible. [Find more information here](#) and below.