Cloth face coverings for the general public are now recommended

The CDC recommends cloth face coverings for the general public, especially in public settings.

Face coverings do not eliminate the need for physical distancing. Always remain at least 6 feet from other people.

The general public should NOT use medical/surgical face masks outside of the health care setting. Medical/surgical face masks should only be used for health care staff and patients.

Cloth Face Coverings

Members of the Idaho State University community who choose to voluntarily wear a face covering are encouraged to use a non-medical, cloth covering.

Cultural norms and personal preferences factor into the decision to wear a face covering. Wearing a mask or face cover by any member of the community is not a signal that they are sick or infectious; their personal decision to wear a face covering should be respected.

Cloth face coverings are meant to protect others from inadvertent exposure to your respiratory droplets.

Medical/Surgical Face Masks

The WHO, CDC, and Idaho Department of Health and Welfare agree that medical/surgical masks are not recommended outside of health care settings.

A surgical mask is meant to help block large droplets, splashes, sprays or splatter that may contain germs. They are meant to protect both the person wearing the mask and those around them in a health care setting.

Some health care facilities require that all staff and patients use medical/surgical face masks when on the premises. Doing so helps ensure that people who do not realize they are infected do not spread the infection to others when in a facility.

Respirator Masks

Respirator masks, such as N95 masks, are reserved for situations that pose a risk for high concentration of infected respiratory droplets. This pertains to some types of medical examinations or procedures that might result in aerosolization of respiratory droplets.

N95 masks and other respirators are in extremely short supply and must be reserved for the people who need them most: health care workers who are fighting this pandemic on the front lines.

The use of an N95 and all respirators by an employee requires participation in the ISU Respiratory Protection Program.