

Your Guide to the Different Types of Face Masks

Type of mask	Pros	Cons
Cloth mask 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended by CDC for general public use Widely available and inexpensive Can be made from home materials Reduces risk of virus transmission when you cough, sneeze, or shout Provides protection against large droplets, sprays, splashes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not filter air/particles May be uncomfortable after long periods of wear “Maskne” – can cause pimples/acne along chin, upper lip, and nasal folds Can muffle speech Requires weekly washing
Surgical mask 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inexpensive and adjustable fit Contain wire at the top for a secure fit around nose and cheekbones Reduces risk of virus transmission when you cough, sneeze, or shout Provides protection against large droplets, sprays, and splashes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not filter air/particles Can muffle speech, although usually less than cloth masks Can have large gaps by the ears Overall looser fit that may shift around during long wear periods Cannot be washed and is designed for single use
N95 respirators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filters air and very small particles when you breathe Provides the best protection against airborne disease transmission Forms a tight seal around the nose and mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NOT recommended for use by the general public Requires specific FIT testing to ensure adequate seal Harder to breathe and talk with this respirator Should be reserved for healthcare workers
Face shield 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides protection against direct contact of splashes, sprays, and large droplets Easier to see facial expressions Can be comfortably worn all day Adjustable models available Does not muffle speech Can be re-used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not filter air or particles Large gaps on the sides allow airborne particles or droplets in air to be breathed in Ideally best used in combination with a face mask
Sandblasting hoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides full face protection and particle filtration while being able to see facial expressions Many models are machine-washable with lens/glass removal Less gaps for potentially contaminated air to enter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muffles speech May be difficult to breathe in for long periods of wear Not as easy to clean or dispose of if it becomes contaminated Glass may fog up May incite anxiety for people with claustrophobia