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Targeted Use of Personal Face Coverings Recommended for Wyoming Residents

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With new national recommendations encouraging the targeted use of personal face coverings due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, a Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) official is updating residents on why using them at key times could be helpful.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other measures meant to keep people apart are difficult to maintain such as grocery stores and

pharmacies.

Dr. Alexia Harrist, state health officer and state epidemiologist with WDH, said as experts continue to learn more about COVID-19, a new virus, it's becoming clear some people can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. "This means the virus can spread between people who are close to each other without them realizing it is happening. That's the reason for this change and new recommendation," she said.

"We want you to stay home and away from other people as much as possible," Harrist said. "But if and when you do need to go out into the community, this is an extra voluntary measure CDC is suggesting to help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others."

"It is critical for everyone to continue following the public health orders we have in place in Wyoming. Wearing a face covering is absolutely not a substitute for social distancing, which remains important to slowing the spread of this virus," she said.

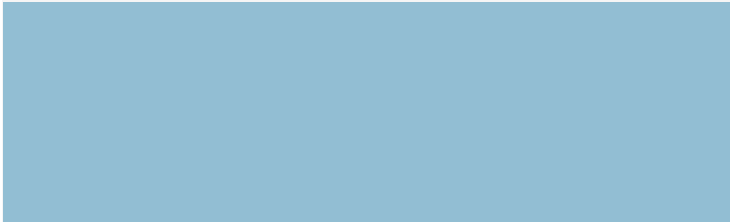
Harrist said the cloth face coverings CDC recommends for most people can be purchased, made or adapted from common items and materials at low cost. "These are definitely not the same thing as surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those types of masks are vital supplies right now across the country and we need to save them for healthcare workers and other medical first responders," she said.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children younger than age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or anyone who can't take the covering off without help.

When removing the coverings, people should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose and mouth and should wash hands immediately after removing. Cloth face coverings should be routinely washed, depending on the frequency of use, in a washing machine.

Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html> for more details and a video demonstration on making coverings for personal use. Added information on using and making the coverings can also be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

More information about COVID-19 and Wyoming can be found at <https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/infectious-disease-epidemiology-unit/disease/novel-coronavirus/>.



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