

# Mask Matters

Choose a Mask That's Right for You



Safety

Protecting What Matters Most



With face coverings and masks available in many different **shapes, styles, and colors**, how do you know which ones provide the protection you need?

## Not All Masks Are Created Equal



### N95 Respirators

- Designed to filter up to 95% of airborne particulates when approved by NIOSH and properly fit
- Not recommended for those with certain medical conditions
- Certified by and tested to NIOSH standards



### Reusable Cloth Masks

- Limit the distribution of and contamination by airborne particles
- Loose fitting and comfortable
- Not tested or certified for particle filtration



### General Purpose Disposable Masks

- Limit the distribution of and contamination by airborne particles
- Held in place by elastic ear loops
- Loose fitting and comfortable
- Not tested or certified for particle filtration



### Surgical/Procedural Disposable Masks

- Protect against large droplets, splashes, or sprays of bodily or hazardous fluids
- Protect others from the wearer's respiratory emissions
- Loose fitting and comfortable
- Held in place by elastic ear loops
- Meet ASTM standards

## Measure Your Mask's Protection

There are **three** major considerations: Efficiency, Fit, and Certification.



### Efficiency

Airborne virus particles as small as 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$  (microns) — about 1/1000th the size of a grain of salt — can be spread through a cough, sneeze, or just breathing.

The Particulate Filtration Efficiency (PFE) of a respirator measures the amount and size of airborne particles it filters out. Higher efficiency ratings indicate more protection.



### Fit

A tight fit ensures better protection. When properly worn, the mask should completely cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the face. Some ways to improve fit are:

- **Adjust the Nose Wire**  
Bend the nose wire to conform to your nose to prevent air leakage and eyeglass fogging.
- **Consider Ear Loops or Straps**  
Ear loops may be more comfortable, but head straps can help improve fit.
- **Remove Facial Hair**  
A clean-shaven face will help ensure a tighter seal.\*

\*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021, April 6). Improve the Fit and Filtration of Your Mask to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19.



### Certification

Various agencies in the United States and Canada are responsible for approving, regulating, and certifying masks.

- **U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)**
- **ASTM International**
- **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**
- **Health Canada**

NIOSH-certified respirators will be stamped with the logo on the mask itself. ASTM-certified masks can be marked on the mask itself and/or its packaging.

Information for this infographic was drawn from various sources, including the following from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Types of Masks and Respirators
- NIOSH-Approved Particulate Filtering Facepiece Respirators
- Understanding Mask and Respirator Differences

Visit [fishersci.com/mask-matters](https://fishersci.com/mask-matters) or [fishersci.ca/mask-matters](https://fishersci.ca/mask-matters) to learn more and shop for respiratory protection products.

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