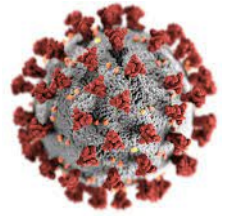


OMICRON ALERT



**FROM THE BAIS ABE INFECTIOUS DISEASES ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

**OMICRON IS IN ST. LOUIS AND SPREADING
RAPIDLY BECAUSE IT IS DRAMATICALLY
MORE INFECTIOUS THAN ANY PREVIOUS
COVID-19 VARIANTS.**

WE HAVE 2 MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

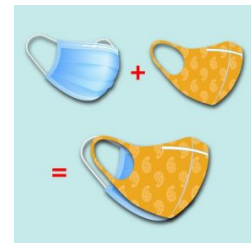
- **GET VACCINATED AND BOOSTED IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE,**
- **WEAR THE BEST MASK YOU CAN:**



N95 MASK



KN95 MASK

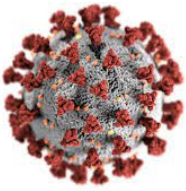


**FABRIC MASK
LAYERED OVER
MED-SURG MASK**

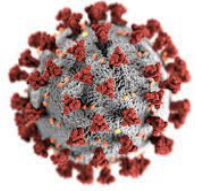
**Fabric masks alone or med-surg ear loop masks alone are
NOT adequate protection for you or those around you.**

**IF YOU ARE WEARING A FABRIC MASK, PLEASE ADD A MED-
SURG MASK UNDERNEATH IT**

(MED-SURG MASKS PROVIDED IN BOX IN LOBBY)



MASKS REQUIRED



**FOR EVERYONE 2 YEARS AND OLDER
(EVEN IF FULLY VACCINATED & BOOSTED)**


Bais Abe Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee ALERT (updated 1-13-22)

**OMICRON IS is DRAMATICALLY MORE CONTAGIOUS
than all other COVID-19 variants and is here!**




MASKS MUST:

- COVER YOUR NOSE AND MOUTH. 
- FIT SNUGLY WITH NO GAPS. 

FOR ADULTS (and adult-sized children):

- MASKS SHOULD BE EITHER N95, KN95, or KF94, or equivalent, or FABRIC WITH 3-PLY MED-SURG MASK UNDERNEATH. 
- FABRIC MASKS ALONE ARE NOT ADEQUATE PROTECTION against Omicron. If that is what you have today, add a med-surg mask underneath your fabric mask.
- LOOSELY-FITTING MED-SURG MASKS ALONE ARE NOT ADEQUATE PROTECTION against Omicron. If that is all you have today, tighten the fit of your med-surg mask as shown in the diagrams below.

FOR CHILDREN 2 years and older (small-sized):

- MASKS SHOULD BE EITHER MULTI-LAYER FABRIC OR OTHER MATERIAL, ideally certified to ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) Level 2 or higher or equivalent, 
- or WELL-FITTED CHILD-SIZED MED-SURG MASKS (+/- a cloth mask on top). 
- or WELL-FITTED CHILD-SIZED N95 or KN95 MASKS 

UPGRADE YOUR MASK PROTECTION TODAY:

BAIS ABE IS PROVIDING MEDICAL-SURGICAL MASKS IN THE BOX IN THE



LOBBY (adult-sized, disposable ASTM Level 2 or 3) for you to use today if the mask you came with today is not adequate as listed above. Next time, please upgrade to **a better mask that provides a higher level of protection** by improved fit and improved filtration.

(Credits: image from CDC)

→ BEST MASKS AND ADEQUATE MASKS ←

HIGH-FILTRATION MASKS ARE BEST FOR OMICRON PROTECTION:

N95 RESPIRATOR MASKS (NIOSH-approved) *filter out 95% of viral particles if FIT is good:*



Well-fitting NIOSH-approved N95 respirator masks are considered to be the most effective mask for protection against aerosol spread of COVID-19. Verify NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) authenticity at: (<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/dispart/default.html>)

- Although NIOSH-certified N95s are prioritized for health-care personnel, they are **no longer in short supply** and are **now widely available** for other people.
- **Do NOT** wear N95 masks with exhalation valves since they allow respiratory droplets containing the virus to escape.

KN95 or KF94 MASKS (*filter out 94 - 95% of viral particles if FIT is good:*)

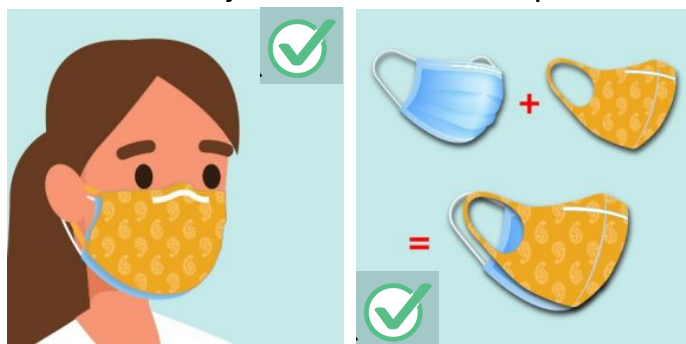


Look for KN95, KF94, or equivalent masks that meet requirements similar to those set by CDC's (NIOSH) for respirators. No CDC certification exists for KN95s or KF94s but the non-profit www.projectN95.org vets KN95s they sell, and the NY Times also vets masks www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/where-to-buy-n95-kn95-masks-online/amp/

- Some options have ear loops and some have head straps.
- **Do NOT** wear KN95 masks with exhalation valves since they allow respiratory droplets containing the virus to escape.

DOUBLE-MASKING by layering a medical-surgical mask beneath a fabric mask provides less protection than well-fitting N95, KN95 or KF94 masks but is adequate:

Layering: An ASTM Level 2-3 (American Society for Testing and Materials) medical-surgical mask can be layered underneath a cloth mask for *improved fit and filtration*. This combination provided much better protection to the wearer and to others as compared with a cloth mask by itself or a medical procedure mask by itself.



- Do not combine two medical procedure masks. Medical procedure masks are not designed to fit tightly and wearing a second medical procedure mask on top of the first medical procedure mask does not help to improve the fit.
- Do not combine an N95, KN95 or KF94 mask with any other masks, either on top of or underneath it.

(Credits: images from CDC and mask manufacturer websites)

→ CHILDREN'S MASKS ←

Important mask criteria for children are FIT, COMFORT, and MASK FILTRATION.

Children's mask options are confusing to navigate, so this may help:

The New York Times endorsed some online vendors that have child-sized masks:

<https://bonafidemasks.com/childrens-face-masks/> (images from manufacturers)

Children's Sized Powecom® KN95-SM™ Respirator Mask (KN95-SM-CHILD-RSP-PWCM-MSK) (<https://bonafidemasks.com/Powecom-kn-95/>):



Respirator mask, soft breathable non-woven fibers. with multi-layer filtration system. Adjustable metal nosepiece. Approximately 15% smaller than the standard Powecom KN95. Not washable (water destroys filtering ability). Discard when visibly dirty. Has anti-fake link to verify authenticity.

Harley Children's Protective Face Mask HL-001

(<https://bonafidemasks.com/harley-childrens-protective-mask-hl001/>):



Respirator mask, foldable, 3-D design, soft non-woven fabric, 3-layer mask with 3 filter layers. Size 17 x 6.5 cm. Padded adjustable nosepiece. 8-hour use. Not washable. Made by Harley Commodity (NIOSH approved N95 maker) with 3 filter layers like the adult Harley N95 masks.

Child Size - 3-Ply Disposable Face Masks (<https://bonafidemasks.com/3-ply-disposable-face-mask-child-size/>):



Non-woven fabric and melt-blown filter paper. Size 5.625" x 3.75". Covered adjustable aluminum nosepiece. Made by factories with FDA certificates of registration, but mask not FDA cleared or approved. Authorized by FDA for public as well as healthcare settings to cover noses and mouths, in accordance with CDC recommendations to prevent community spread.

Wire-Cutter has a good review of children's masks:

<https://www.wired.com/gallery/best-kids-face-masks/> (images from manufacturers)



Wire-cutter's Best Kids' Mask:

Happy Masks Pro Series (happymask.com): Light, breathable, beaked shape, 5-layer mask, 2 non-woven layers, nanofiber membrane filter (99.9 percent filtration of viruses and other particulates down to 0.3 microns in size).

Adjustable nosepiece. Must be hand-washed and air-dried. Filter good for 50+ washes. Masks almost never in stock, and you currently need to join a waitlist for password-protected restocks.



Wire-cutter's Best Kids' Mask (Alternative):

Enro masks (enro.com): Light, breathable, 3-layer mask, machine washable/dryable, ASTM (American Soc. For Testing and Materials) certified to Level 2 (filtration efficiency for 0.1 micron particles: 99% new, 98% after 100+ washes).



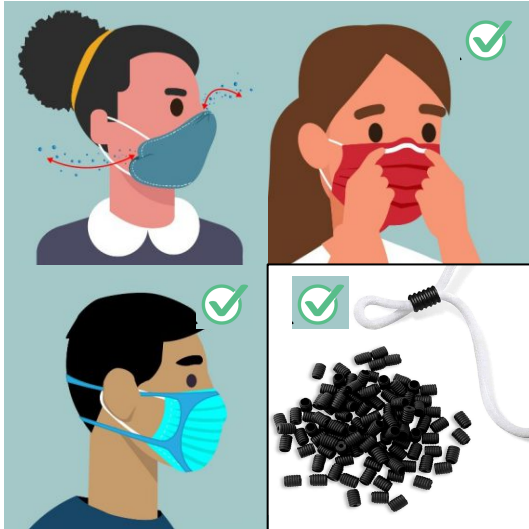
Wire-cutter's Best Kids' Disposable Mask:

Airpop Kids Reusable Washable Face Mask (airpophealth.com):

Lightweight, contoured, 4-layer mask, ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials)-certified to Level 2, same efficacy as surgical masks and can filter out virus particles. 40 hours of cumulative use.

→ HOW TO IMPROVE MASK FIT ←

Ensuring that masks fit well on the face is very important to help prevent getting and spreading COVID-19. When there are gaps, air with respiratory droplets containing the virus can leak in and out around the edges of the mask (on the top or the sides).

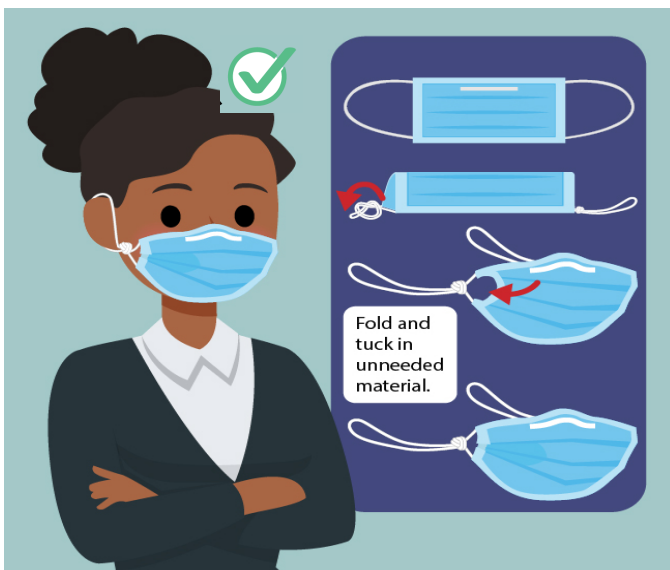


Nose wires: A nose wire (a metal strip along the top of the mask) can improve fit and help prevent air leakage at the top of the mask. To get a good fit, make sure to bend the nose wire over your nose to conform to your face.

Mask Fitters and Braces: These devices can be used over a medical procedure mask or a cloth mask to improve the fit by helping to reduce air leakage from around the edges of the mask.

Ear loop tighteners:

Fit can be improved for masks with ear loops by using ear loop tighteners.



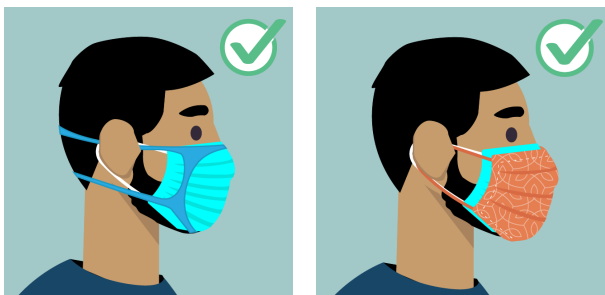
Knotting and Tucking a Medical-Surgical mask:

This technique can be used to improve the fit of a medical procedure mask. Knot the ear loops of the mask where they join the edge of the mask, then fold and tuck the unneeded material under the edges. (For instructions, see the following <https://youtu.be/GzTAZDsNBe0> external icon)

Knotting: This can be done for ear loops or head straps (especially the lower head strap) of **any mask** to improve fit.



Certain types of facial hair, like beards, make mask fitting difficult. People with beards can do one or more of these to improve their protection by improving mask fit and filtration:



- Shave their beards.
- Trim their beards close to the face.
- Use a mask fitter or brace.
- Wear one disposable mask underneath a cloth mask that has multiple layers of fabric. The second mask should push the edges of the inner mask snugly against the face and beard.
- Tighten ear loops by tying a knot in each loop.

(Credits: diagram images from CDC websites)

BAIS ABE THANKS YOU FOR KEEPING YOURSELF AND OTHERS SAFE!