

Should I wear a mask?

As of February 17th, 2022, New Mexico doesn't require a face mask in all indoor spaces any longer. However, you may choose to continue to wear a mask to protect yourself or others from getting very sick from COVID. If you feel more comfortable continuing to wear a mask in public spaces, that is okay!

Some places in New Mexico still require a face mask such as hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, adult day cares, hospice facilities, rehabilitation facilities, state correctional facilities, juvenile justice facilities, residential treatment centers, veteran's homes, congregate care settings, and community homes. Some private businesses also may still choose to require a mask.

When deciding whether to wear a mask, think about:



People with certain health conditions might be more at risk for getting very sick from COVID-19. Some of these are

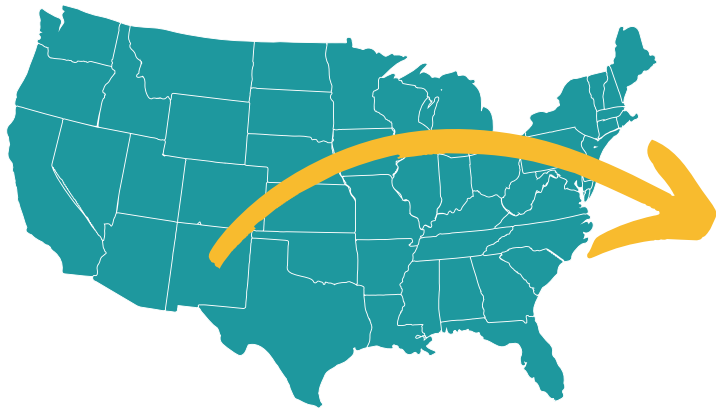
- Cancer
- Cerebrovascular disease or stroke
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver diseases
- Chronic lung diseases
- Cystic fibrosis
- Dementia or other neurological (brain) conditions
- Diabetes
- Disabilities
- Heart conditions
- HIV Infection
- Mental health disorders
- Organ or stem cell transplant
- Overweight and obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease or thalassemia
- Smoking cigarettes (current or former)
- Substance abuse
- Tuberculosis
- Weakened immune system

You might be more likely to catch COVID in some settings compared to others.

It is good to consider what kind of environment you will be in when deciding to wear a mask or not. Some examples are shown below.



Check out your community's COVID-19 levels:



Each community is unique in the amount of COVID-19 that is spreading through the area.

You can check the spread of COVID-19 in the United States as well as in each county in New Mexico by visiting [COVID.gov](https://www.covid.gov)

Each county is rated by having either low, medium or high spread of COVID-19. This will give you ideas on safety steps you can take.

Low Spread

- Stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccines and boosters.
- Get tested if you have symptoms and keep COVID at-home tests on hand.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Medium Spread

- Stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccines and boosters.
- Get tested if you have symptoms and keep COVID at-home tests on hand.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- If someone you live with is at risk for getting very sick from COVID, consider wearing a mask and self-testing before interacting with at-risk people.

Higher Spread

- Stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccines and boosters.
- Get tested if you have symptoms and keep COVID at-home tests on hand.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- If someone you live with is at risk for getting very sick from COVID, consider wearing a mask and self-testing before interacting with at-risk people.
- Wear a well-fitted mask indoors, whether you are vaccinated or not.
- Limit your exposure to crowded and indoor activities.

People age 65 and older are more likely to get sick, be hospitalized, or to die from COVID than younger age groups.



2 times more likely to get sick from COVID

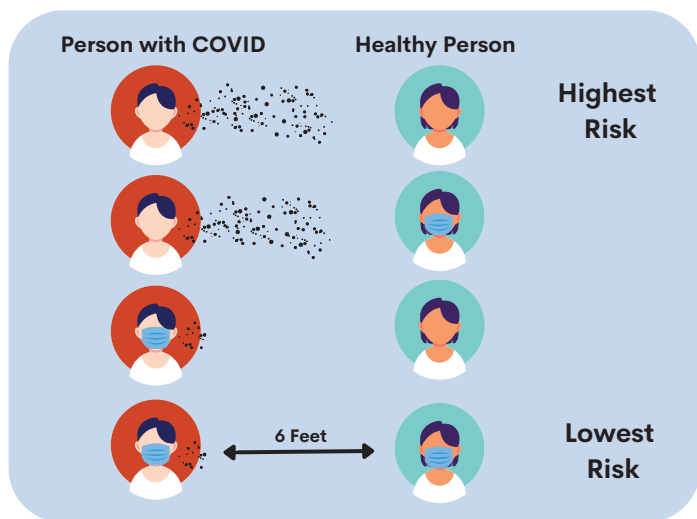


35 times more likely to get hospitalized



1,100 times more likely to die from COVID

You can help prevent the spread of COVID in your community by wearing a mask when you are feeling sick.



If you have tested positive for COVID or are feeling sick, you can wear a mask to lower the chances of giving it to other people.

- If you are sick with COVID and close to other people for long times, it is best if everyone wear masks.
- Wearing a mask when you are sick will help prevent others who are at risk from getting seriously sick from COVID.

Some masks offer more protection than others.

For the best protection, choose a high-quality mask like a KN95 or N95 mask. Make sure the mask fits snugly around your face while still being able to breathe easily. Pick a mask with layers to keep your respiratory droplets in and other's out.



Do I always have to wear a mask?

Think of masks as something you layer on and layer off "depending on the weather." So if it is cold outside, you add mittens, or an extra jacket. If you are in an activity with a high risk of COVID (like a large indoor gathering), then wear a well-fitting mask. If you are in an activity with a low risk of COVID (like outdoor hiking), then you don't need to wear a mask. Think about your risk and the risk of others to make a decision about wearing a mask.

Layering up



Layering down

