**Cloth Face Coverings**

**Activity Plan**

**BACKGROUND**

During times of disease outbreak, preventing the accidental spread of a virus helps protect everyone. The health care workers and staff at residential care facilities and other places where people must live close together, are especially in need of help keeping themselves and their residents safe and protected.

Making a protective face covering is a good way to shield ourselves and others from spreading germs or viruses and a great way to practice basic sewing skills to help others. We can use our basic sewing skills and a few simple supplies to create an item that is important to keeping us and others safe and healthy.

**Learning Through Service**

You may want to start by making face coverings for members of your family who want or may need them. When you feel confident in making them, it is time to find out who else may need them.

Think about places in your community where people must live or work in close contact with others—nursing homes, residential facilities, jails, prisons, juvenile facilities, etc.—and healthcare settings where homemade face coverings may be used for patients. Find out if someone in your community is coordinating donations of cloth face coverings. If you are not sure how to find out, start with your local Extension educator. Here are some of the kinds of things it is important to know before making cloth face coverings to donate:

- Does the institution need homemade, washable face coverings?
- What design requirements do they have for cloth face coverings (fabric, ties or elastic, design, etc.)?
- How many cloth face coverings does the institution need?
- What is a safe way to make donations to the institution?
- Is there anything else we need to know about making a donation?

**Goals:**

Using basic sewing skills to sew reusable cloth face coverings to help prevent the spread of disease.

**Life Skills:**

- Concern for others
- Contributing to a Group Effort
- Disease Prevention

**Grade Levels:**

3rd grade and up

**Length of Experience:**

30-40 minutes

**Supplies Needed:**

- Tight-woven cotton and/or cotton flannel fabric
- ¼” wide elastic
- Thread
- Scissors
- Pins
- Sewing machine

**Do Ahead:**

- Print/make copies of pattern
- Print provided resource cards to attach to finished face coverings.

**Sources:**

Adapted by Dawn VandeVoort, Door County Extension 4-H Youth Development Educator, from The Turban Project’s How to Sew a Medical Face Mask (www.facebook.com/turbanproject) and JOANN’s How to Make a Face Mask video tutorial (www.joann.com/make-to-give-response). Health recommendations sourced from the Centers for Disease Control (https://www.cdc.gov/) at the links provided.
**ACTIVITY**

1. Prepare fabric and elastic—using the template (included with this lesson). Cut two pieces of fabric (Choosing tight-woven cotton fabrics, these can be both cotton; one cotton and one cotton flannel; or both cotton flannel). Cut two pieces of elastic that are 7" long (use the line on the pattern marked “elastic”).

2. Place fabric right sides together. On the short ends, place the ends of the elastic (as shown in the photo) in the corners between the layers of fabric.

3. Pin the layers together, securing the elastic pieces in the layers.
4. Sew the layers together. Sew around the outside edges, using a ¼” seam allowance. When you get to the corners, use your sewing machine’s “reverse” feature to back up and reinforce the stitching. Then go forward to the corner. Pivot the needle at the corner, go forward 4-5 stitches, then reverse 4-5 stitches back to reinforce the corner again. Then proceed forward along that side. Make sure to leave a small opening (about 2 inches) to be able to turn the fabrics right side out.

5. Turn fabrics right side out through the opening in your stitching. Gently turn the layers right side out, and tug gently on the elastic pieces to get all the seams flat.
6. Flatten the fabrics, using your hands to smooth out the pieces.

7. Where your fabric opening is located, fold the edges inside and place a pin through the fabric to close the opening. You will sew this shut in the next step.

8. Making the tucks in the ends—This part can be a little tricky. Ask someone for help if needed to make the tucks. You will need to make three small tucks on each short end. It is easiest to start with the middle tuck. First, find the midpoint of the side using a ruler and pins. When you find the middle of that piece, mark it with a pin and fold it over about ½ inch. Secure it with a pin (see picture for example).

9. When you have created the middle tuck, create two more tucks, one on each side of the middle one. When you have created all three tucks on one side, your cloth face covering should look like the image below on the left.

Repeat this process on the other end, making sure that the tucks are going in the same direction so it looks like the image below on the right.
10. When the tucks are all pinned in place, it is time to topstitch around the entire covering to secure the tucks and close the opening. Sew around the edge using a ¼-inch seam allowance, removing pins as you come to them. Make sure that the elastic stays free and does not get caught in your topstitching. Once you have sewn around the edge once, you may wish to sew around again as an added level of support and strength.

**REFLECT AND APPLY**
During your project or after your project, think about these questions:

- How did you feel while helping with this project?
- What were your favorite parts of this project?
- What are some other ways you can use your sewing skills to support your community? What are other projects that you can do with these skills to help others?
- In addition to cloth face coverings, what are some other ways we can help prevent the spread of disease and viruses?
- What does this project mean to you? Why is it important to help with projects like these?

**EXPLORE MORE**

- What could you do to learn more about what is needed in your community? Think about organizations that help people where you live. What are they doing to help people right now? Are there ways you can help while staying safe and healthy?
- What if you learn there is a need for larger or smaller cloth face coverings than the ones you learned to make here? Think about how you might change the pattern to make it work for larger or smaller people. This is a way to practice adapting sewing patterns to fit other sizes of people.
- Some institutions may need a certain kind of face covering that is different from this pattern. After you find out what they need, how could you adapt or change this pattern to use different kinds of fabric or ties or other things they might need? What have you learned about sewing cloth face coverings that will help you follow a different pattern?
- **For youth in grades 9 and higher:** A stigma is the disapproval or discrimination against a person based on a characteristic that may seem to separate them from other parts of society. Use the Internet to learn more about how wearing cloth face coverings may have a stigma attached to it for some religious, racial, and/or cultural groups. If a person wears a cloth face covering in public places to protect themselves and others from viruses, how might members of some groups feel stigmatized for covering their faces in this way? Why might they feel unsafe because of that stigma? If almost everyone wears a cloth face covering, how would that change any stigma attached to wearing them?
Adult Cloth Face Covering Pattern (9” x 6”)
(cut 2)

Elastic - 7”
How to Protect Yourself and Others:

How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering
Cloth face coverings should—
• fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
• be secured with ties or ear loops
• include multiple layers of fabric
• allow for breathing without restriction
• be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape