



JACKSON COUNTY

Health & Human Services

Health & Human Services
Public Health Division

140 S. Holly St.
Medford, OR 97501

COVID-19 Update 4/1/20

	CASES	FATALITIES
WORLD (4/1/20, per Johns Hopkins)	887,067	44,264
USA (4/1/20, per Johns Hopkins)	190,740	4,127
OREGON (3/31/20, per OHA)	690	18
JACKSON COUNTY(4/1/20, per JC HHS)	22	0

(Note: The above numbers are current at the time of release, but continue to change constantly.)

PRESS RELEASE ON BEHALF OF JACKSON COUNTY

If you have any questions, or would like an interview, please reach out to the contact listed below.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 1, 2020

For media interviews with Dr. Jim Shames, Jackson County Medical Director, please contact Tanya Phillips by 1:15 pm. Dr. Shames will be available between 1:45 pm and 2:45 pm.

Tanya Phillips
Health Promotion Program Manager
Jackson County Public Health
(541) 770-7708
phillitf@jacksoncounty.org

Masking Recommendations to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

[Medford, Oregon] — The Centers for Disease Control is considering the recommendation of wearing a mask in public. Social distancing, frequent hand washing, and avoiding others when sick remain the mainstay of our public health efforts. Don't assume that wearing a mask takes the place of any of those healthy behaviors.

Dr. Jim Shames, Jackson County Health Officer, believes it would be beneficial for families to obtain 1 or 2 cloth facemasks for use out in public. They can be washed when dirty and used over and over again.

Jackson County Public Health is NOT recommending that you purchase manufactured surgical masks, please save them for the healthcare workers that rely on them for protection. According to Dr. Jim Shames, "when we both wear a face mask, I protect you and you protect me."

At the beginning of this pandemic, the strong message to the public from the CDC and WHO was not to wear masks unless you were already infected and needed to interact with others. The assumption was that people didn't spread the disease without symptoms, and that droplet spread occurred with coughing and sneezing. If sick people wore masks, the rest of us didn't need to. Also, with a shortage of masks for healthcare workers, "wasting" that resource wasn't a good idea.

There are a number of reasons to reconsider wearing a cloth mask:

- We now know that some people are contagious before they ever get symptoms and some never feel sick. They might spread the disease before they would ever consider masking up.
- Droplets do indeed transmit the disease, but they can be generated from talking as well as coughing. Just standing next to someone talking could spread the disease if neither of you are masked.
- Wearing a mask while sick is stigmatizing for those who wear them. Universal use wouldn't identify who was sick and who wasn't.
- You are less likely to touch your mouth and nose while wearing a mask
- DIY masks can possibly provide protection to the public without impacting the supply of manufactured masks currently prioritized for healthcare workers. If the medical community accepts the use of these masks in the healthcare setting, then these masks will be available and ready to go.
- There is data that suggests that in countries where masking is encouraged for all citizens, the rate of disease transmission may be reduced by their actions.

Volunteers are making these masks locally using various patterns. The principle is the same regardless of design. Having a physical barrier to prevent droplets from landing on others, discouraging the wearers from touching their faces, and possibly reducing large droplets from landing on mucous membranes are the goals for wearing masks in public. And they look good.

Custom DIY face masks have already become popular with youths. People have been making and buying a wide variety of fun and unique designs, like in the photo below.



If you choose to wear a mask, be careful when adjusting the mask and avoid reaching under it (they itch) to touch your nose or mouth because the virus can spread by unwashed hands. Also, masks do not work well if they are soiled or damaged.

There are a variety of reusable masks available online at websites like Amazon.com. Search keywords “reusable masks”

Here is one example of a simple no-sew homemade mask: https://youtu.be/IOe_8z8k01U

For more information:

The public can call 211-information with general questions

OHA Emerging Respiratory Disease page: www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus

CDC COVID-19 page: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Jackson County Health and Human Services: <http://jacksoncountyor.org/hhs/COVID-19>

###