

Our apologies, the news release has been revised. Please use this version.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

BRUCE S. ANDERSON, Ph.D.
DIRECTOR

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Hawai'i Department of Health reminds everyone that face masks are no substitute for physical distancing

HONOLULU – Across the state, customers and staff at pharmacies, supermarkets, and take-out food establishments are wearing cloth masks and using physical distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Many local and national chain stores have established controls on how many customers can enter a store at one time. The Joint Information Center has produced a printable store-front poster to further encourage physical distancing, aimed at flattening the curve of new COVID-19 cases. Download the poster here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/f3crddhm1dvx1e0/AADYxpbepZ5d_dpKPWFopOJHa?dl=0

"I'm pleased to see how quickly people are responding to the guidance to use face covering in addition to physical distancing and only going out for essential reasons," said Health Director Bruce Anderson. "We urge all essential businesses to immediately implement physical distancing measures, throughout their operations, not just at the check-out counters. Wearing a cloth or fabric mask complements other critical measures and can prevent spreading the disease to others."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Health (DOH) have recommended wearing a cloth face covering in public places, like stores and at takeout food establishments, masks are not a substitute from physical distancing.

"Physical distancing is still the most effective way of preventing the spread of this disease in Hawai'i," said Anderson. "If you aren't used to wearing a mask, it's difficult to remember not to touch your face when putting it on or adjusting it. It is so important to avoid touching your face with unwashed hands to prevent catching the virus."

The CDC guidance emphasizes that **maintaining 6-foot physical distancing remains important for slowing the spread of the virus**. Masks are primarily considered an infection

source control measure designed to keep sick people from spreading their germs to others. Masks complement physical distancing. **They are not a substitute for stay-at-home orders and probably less effective than frequent handwashing and simply staying a safe distance away from other people, who may be infected and not know it.**

“It’s alright,” Anderson added, “to politely remind others to practice good physical distancing, even when they’re wearing a mask.”

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