Institute Guidelines on Use of Face Coverings to Protect Others

When worn properly, face coverings mitigate the transmission of disease by preventing the wearer from potentially spreading droplets with the virus when the wearer coughs, sneezes, or talks.

Institute Requirements
In accordance with California’s broader economic reopening and updates to the state’s COVID-19 workplace regulations, Caltech will relax some on-site preventative measures, including face covering requirements, as of June 21:

Fully vaccinated individuals will be allowed to remove their face coverings indoors if they are alone in a room, or if everyone in the indoor space has provided proof of vaccination through the COVID-19 Vaccination Documentation application and no one is showing symptoms of COVID-19.

Whenever employees or students on campus are interacting with visitors, vendors, or members of the public in an indoor setting, including dining (unless seated and eating) and retail spaces, all individuals in the indoor environment are still required to wear a face covering. While this requirement may be more restrictive than general practice in the broader community, we feel it is important to create consistency in our protocols across campus facilities. This requirement carries forward the office-specific requirements that require all individuals to wear a face covering when there is a potential for the space to include a mix of vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

Any individual who feels more comfortable wearing a face covering may continue to do so.

All individuals on campus, regardless of vaccination status, are allowed to remove their face coverings outdoors, as long as they are not showing symptoms of COVID-19.

Selecting A Face Cover
When selecting a face covering, there are many choices. Current CDC guidance recommends that individuals do the following:

- Wear a covering with two or more layers of breathable, washable fabric
- Wear a covering that fits snugly against your face without gaps
- Reduce fogging when wearing glasses by finding a covering that fits closely over your nose and one that has a nose wire

The CDC does not currently recommend the use of face shields and gaiters. Evaluation of these face covers is on-going but effectiveness is unknown at this time.

An independent Caltech faculty group has explored the effectiveness of several dozen commercially available masks (access.caltech credentials required).