Face Masks and Coverings for the General Public

Face masks and coverings do not replace the need to keep a distance of 6 feet from others, washing hands often, and staying home when sick.

It is strongly recommended that people wear a face mask or covering when in public, especially when it is difficult to maintain a two metre (six feet) distance from others, such as on transit, in an elevator, when shopping or entering and leaving an apartment building. If sick, wear a mask when going to a medical appointment. Do not use public transit.

It is important to use and clean a mask properly. Using a mask incorrectly can accidentally spread infection to the wearer. Be respectful of people who may choose not to wear a mask. Some health conditions make breathing through a mask difficult.

Wearing a cloth face mask or face covering has not been proven to protect the person wearing it, but it can help to protect others around you, even if you do not have symptoms.

Do not use N95 and surgical masks, as they are in limited supply, and urgently needed for healthcare workers.

Qualities of a Good Cloth Mask or Face Covering

A good cloth mask or face covering should:
- Be made of at least two layers of tightly woven fabric (e.g. cotton or linen).
- Allow for easy breathing.
- Fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops.
- Maintain its shape after washing and drying.
- Be comfortable and not require frequent adjustment.
- Be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose and mouth without gaping.
- Use different fabrics for each side of the mask, so you know which side faces in and out.

Masks or face coverings should not:
- Impair vision or interfere with tasks.
- Be made of plastic or other non-breathable materials.
- Be secured with tape or other inappropriate materials.
- Be made of materials that may fall apart easily, such as tissues.

For instructions on making a mask using fabric, a t-shirt or a bandana, visit the Government of Canada website.

Putting on a Mask or Face Covering

- Wash your hands before putting on a mask.
- Keep hair away from your face.
- Place the mask over your mouth and nose snugly. There should be no gaping.
- Be sure it fits comfortably and that it’s easy to breathe, to avoid adjusting the mask while using it.
- Avoid touching your face and mask while using it.
• Do not share your mask with others.
• Do not leave your mask around your neck, hanging from your ear, or on your forehead.
• Do not put your used mask in your pocket because it is contaminated with germs. Put it in a plastic bag until you can wash it.

Taking off a Face Mask
• Change your mask as soon as it gets damp or soiled.
• Remove the mask without touching the outside of the mask.
• Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth when removing the mask.
• Put the mask directly in the laundry or a lined bin to be cleaned.
• Wash cloth masks after each use, in the laundry with other items using the hot cycle.
• Discard non-reusable masks in a lined garbage.
• Clean surfaces that a dirty mask touches.
• Wash your hands thoroughly after removing your mask.

People Who Should Not Use Face Masks
• Children under the age of two.
• Anyone who has trouble breathing.
• Anyone who cannot remove the mask without assistance.

Wearing a Mask at Work
Follow instructions provided by your employer regarding the option of choosing to wear a non-medical mask or face covering.

More information
For more information, visit our website at www.toronto.ca/COVID19 or call us at 416-338-7600.