

Why wear a cloth mask?

The primary benefit of covering your nose and mouth is that you protect others. The virus is spread through coughs, sneezes, and other respiratory secretions. Many times, pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals can spread the virus for up to 48 hours before showing symptoms. Up to 25% of people who have the virus never feel symptoms.

- Cloth masks help limit the dispersion of coughs/sneezes.
- Cloth masks can reduce the frequency of face touches.
- Reduced effectiveness of the user adjusts or removes the mask often
- When used in combination with social distancing, and good hand hygiene you are reducing your risk of illness.

Do I still have to physically (socially) distance when wearing a mask?

Yes, wearing a mask is one of many preventative measures (physical (social) distancing, handwashing, limiting social interactions) that when used together help limit the spread of COVID-19.

Who must wear a cloth mask?

Cloth masks are highly encouraged for workers who cannot physically (social) distance while working on campus. Any worker may opt to wear a cloth mask.

Please Note: Cloth masks are not a suitable alternative for tasks that require respiratory protection.

Who shouldn't wear a cloth mask?

Masks must not be worn by anyone who has trouble breathing and must be removed if breathing troubles develop while wearing a mask.

Cloth masks must not be worn as an alternative for tasks that require respiratory protection.

What cloth masks are acceptable?

Not all cloth masks are created equal. Cloth masks must allow for easy breathing, fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops, maintain their shape after washing and drying and, be comfortable and not require frequent adjustment. Cloth masks must be made of multiple layers (2+) of breathable cotton fabric or linen. The Government of Canada recommends woven cotton e.g. quilting fabric or cotton sheets. The following link provides tutorials for making [Non-medical masks and face coverings](#).

Cloth masks must not be shared with others, impair vision or interfere with tasks, or be made of plastic or other non-breathable materials.

What if I do not have a cloth mask?

If you choose to use a cloth mask and do not have access to one, the University of Saskatchewan has some available (for purchase) at Facilities Stores. Please contact Facilities Stores at 306-966-4501.

How do I properly wear a cloth mask?

A cloth mask must fit securely from near the bridge of the nose to under your chin and stretch about halfway or more to your ears. The ear loops or ties must be secure and not allow for the mask to gape open.

Do not fidget or adjust your mask after it has been put on. Do not take breaks from your mask by wearing it below your nose, letting it come above your chin or pushing the whole mask below your chin. *Fidgeting and wearing a mask in these ways seriously reduces or negates the advantages of wearing a mask.*



Correct fit

DO NOT WEAR YOUR MASK:

Below chin



With large side gaps



Exposing chin



Nose exposed



Tip of nose



(From New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/well/live/coronavirus-face-mask-mistakes.html>)

How do I put on a cloth mask?

1. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based disinfectant.
2. Remove the mask from the clean bag.
3. Check the mask for any rips or tears.
4. Make sure the mask exterior is facing out.
5. Place mask on your face, while holding on to the edges. Check the fit in a mirror if necessary.
6. Put one loop around ear, or tie the upper ties behind your head
7. If the mask has a bendable nose piece pinch it around the bridge of your nose and tie the lower ties around your head.
8. Make sure the mask covers your nose and mouth so that the bottom edge is under you chin.
9. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based disinfectant.



How do I take off a cloth mask?

1. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based disinfectant.
2. Do not touch the part of the mask covering the nose and mouth, it may be contaminated.
3. Untie or remove the ear loops and remove the mask by the straps.
4. Put in a designated “dirty bag” like a zip-top plastic bag.
5. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based disinfectant.



How do I wash my mask/Do I have to wash it every day?

If a mask becomes wet or soiled, immediately replace it with a clean one. Place the wet/soiled one in a designated “dirty bag” until it can be laundered or discarded. Masks must be laundered after use. Do not allow masks to sit unlaundered at home or in the workplace for more 24 hours before laundering. A “use” is a single shift at work or a trip to a public place (e.g. grocery stores).

How to Launder a Mask:

1. Remove masks from “dirty bag” and immediately put into washing machine.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based disinfectant.
3. Use your regular laundry detergent and if desired bleach.
4. Wash and tumble dry on hot.
5. Remove from dryer and place into a designated “clean bag”.

