COVIDSafe Guidance

CSG01 - Respiratory Masks

When to wear a mask

The NSW Government strongly recommends that you take extra precautions in some circumstances to protect others. Wear a mask:

- *if it is hard to maintain 1.5 metres of physical distance;*
- *when in high-risk areas such as public transport, supermarkets, shops, churches and other places of worship;*
- *when caring for vulnerable people; and*
- *when working in cafes, restaurants and pubs.*

If you want to wear a face mask at work or while volunteering you can however it is important you use the correct type, know how to correctly fit the mask and when to dispose of it.

What masks to use for COVID

P2 and N95 masks, other single-use masks (commonly called surgical masks) and reusable cloth masks all help to prevent the spread of COVID-19, if used correctly.

- ***P2 and N95 masks** offer protection from diseases spread by airborne transmission.*
- ***Single-use, surgical masks** - Use surgical masks made with a non-woven, meltblown polypropylene layer. Do not buy masks that have holes or a valve.*

These masks are available from Vinnies and recommended for higher risk work areas including health & aged care, accommodation and other client facing services.

- ***Reusable cloth masks** - Properly constructed cloth masks are made from at least three layers of breathable fabric to ensure adequate protection. You will need more than one reusable mask.*

If you choose to make or source your own reusable cloth mask it is recommended that these masks are only used in lower risk areas such as offices, retail stores or areas where social distancing is unable to be maintained.

Instructions from NSW Health on how to make a cloth mask

Why wear a mask?

Wearing a face mask provides an additional physical barrier and helps to reduce community transmission.

COVID-19 is spread from close contact with an infected person and can be spread when a person coughs or sneezes.

A mask helps to contain droplets when a person coughs or sneezes and reduces the likelihood of COVID-19 spreading.

COVIDSafe Guidance

Sharing safety learnings across the Society

VINNIES

01b

More information contact your WHS Regional Partner

August 2020

CSG01b - Respiratory Masks

How to wear a mask correctly

Your mask should cover your nose and mouth. Your mask should fit securely around your face (that is snugly under your chin, over the bridge of your nose and against the sides of your face).

Put on your mask safely

1. Before putting on your mask, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Or use hand sanitiser that is made up of over 60% alcohol.
2. Ensure you are using a new surgical mask or clean cloth mask. Do not reuse surgical masks. Always use a clean and dry cloth mask.
3. Check the mask for defects, such as tears or broken loops.
4. If you are wearing a surgical mask, position the coloured side of the mask outward.
5. If the mask has:
    I. Ear loops: Hold the mask by both ear loops and place one loop over each ear.
    II. Ties: Hold the mask by the upper strings. Tie the upper strings in a secure bow near the crown of your head. Tie the bottom strings securely in a bow near the nape of your neck.
    III. Dual elastic bands: Pull the bottom band over your head and position it against the nape of your neck. Pull the top band over your head and position it against the crown of your head.
    IV. A metallic strip or wire: Mould the bendable metallic upper strip to the shape of your nose by pinching and pressing down on it with your fingers.
6. Pull the bottom of the mask over your mouth and chin. Be sure your mask fits snugly.

Wear your mask safely

- *For each new situation put on a clean mask. For example, you might wear a mask on public transport until you get to work. You shouldn't reuse the same mask during your journey home. Carry clean masks in a paper or zip-lock bag with you.*
- *Don't touch the mask while you are wearing it. If you do touch it, wash or sanitise your hands.*
- *If your mask gets soiled or damp, replace it with a new one.*

*Face masks will vary in type and how they fit to your face. The below links are to **instructional videos** from NSW Health on how to correctly fit a flat surgical and duckbill type mask.*

- [Flat Surgical type disposable mask instructional video](#)

- [Duckbill style P2/N95 type disposable mask instructional video](#)

Do's & Don'ts

Do
- change the mask when it becomes moist
- wash your hands if you touch or dispose of a used mask
- wait until you are away from the enclosed area before removing the mask
- dispose of used masks in a closed receptacle.

Don't
- touch the mask while it is being worn
- reapply the mask after it has been removed
- leave the mask dangling around your neck.