

Guidance for the general public on the usage of mask

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This document provides guidance for the general public on the usage of masks during the COVID-19 pandemic. The recommendations are based on the current epidemic stage in Seychelles and may need to be revised as the situation evolves.

Aims

To prevent individuals with respiratory symptoms from spreading infections in the community.
To prevent the spread of infection in public places where physical distancing cannot be achieved at stage of community transmission.

Rational

Current evidence suggests that most transmission of COVID-19 is occurring from symptomatic people to others in close contact when the appropriate Personal protective Equipment (PPE) is not worn. Mask is part of PPE ensemble and is included in the package of prevention and control measures to limit spread of respiratory viral disease including COVID-19. Masks can be used for the protection of healthy person (to protect that person when in contact with an infected individual) or for source control (worn by an infected individual to prevent outward transmission). Whether or not masks are used compliance with Infection Prevention Control (IPC) measures of hand hygiene, physical distancing and respiratory hygiene are critical to prevent transmission of covid-19.

Access

Medical (surgical) mask

Medical masks should be reserved for health workers and at-risk individuals when advised by a health professional.

Non-medical (fabric) mask

Non-medical (fabric) mask can be fabricated by the wearer as per specifications in table 2.0.

Places where it is recommended for the general public to wear a mask

In line with revised WHO interim guideline 05.06.2020, use of mask by the general public is recommended under the following conditions.

AT ALL TIMES

1. Persons with any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (including but not limited to fever, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath and muscle pain) at the point of seeking medical intervention.
2. Specific settings where the physical distance of at least 1m cannot be maintained between individuals such as:
 - Public transportation e.g. buses, planes and ferries
 - Specific work settings where workers are in close contacts and alternative physical barriers are none existent such as factory-based work settings

Table 1.0 provides specific information on type of mask suitable for each setting.

Table 1.0: Examples of where the general public should be encouraged to use medical and non-medical masks in areas with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 transmission

Situations/settings	Population	Purpose of mask use	Type of mask to consider wearing if recommended locally
Settings where a physical distancing cannot be achieved (close contact)	General public on transportation (e.g on a bus, plane, ferries) Specific working conditions which place the employee in close contact or potential close contact with others e.g factories.	Potential benefit for source control	Non-medical mask
Settings where physical distancing cannot be achieved and increased risk of infection and/or negative outcomes	Vulnerable populations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People aged ≥60 years • People with underlying comorbidities, such as cardiovascular disease or diabetes mellitus, chronic lung disease, cancer, cerebrovascular disease, immunosuppression 	Protection	Medical mask
Any setting in the community	Persons with any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19	Source control	Medical mask

***Mask should not be worn by children less than 5 years of age**

Places where it is recommended

Usage of mask by staffs in other work settings is optional but is not an official requirement.

Usage of mask by the general public in situation of confirmed COVID-19 community transmission

In the event of confirmed community transmission, it is recommended that all members of the general public wear a mask in all public places where physical distancing of at least 1 m cannot be reliably maintained.

Specifications for non-medical mask

Non-medical masks can be used by the general public in public settings and where the physical distance of 1m cannot be maintained. Table 2.0 provides a summary of guidance and considerations on the composition, construction and management of non-medical masks.

Table 2.0 Summary guidance and practical considerations for non-medical mask production and management

Material selection	<p>Choose materials that capture particles and droplets but remain easy to breathe through (such as polypropylene and cotton) and fabrics that support high temperature</p> <p>Avoid stretchy materials (such as nylon) as they provide lower filtration efficiency</p>
Number of layers	<p>Use a minimum number of three layers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the innermost layers should be of a hydrophilic (water-absorbing) material (such as cotton) • the outermost layer should be made of a hydrophobic (does not easily absorb liquid) material (such as polypropylene and polyester)
Mask shape	<p>Can be flat-fold or duck-bill to fit closely over the nose, cheeks and chin of the wearer.</p> <p>Mask should be held in place with a little adjustment using elastic bands or ties.</p>
Maintenance and usage	<p>Mask should only be worn by one person and not be shared</p> <p>Mask should be changed if wet or visibly soiled</p> <p>The mask should be removed without touching the front of the mask.</p> <p>The wearer should ensure not to touch the eyes or mouth after mask removal and either discard the mask in a closed foot-operated bin or place it in a sealed bag where it is kept until it can be washed and clean.</p> <p>The wearer should perform hand hygiene immediately after mask removal.</p> <p>Non-medical mask should be washed frequently. If the fabric look noticeable worn out, the mask should be discarded.</p>

HOW TO WEAR A NON-MEDICAL FABRIC MASK SAFELY

who.int/epi-win

Do's →



Clean your hands before touching the mask



Inspect the mask for damage or if dirty



Adjust the mask to your face without leaving gaps on the sides



Cover your mouth, nose, and chin



Avoid touching the mask



Clean your hands before removing the mask



Remove the mask by the straps behind the ears or head



Pull the mask away from your face



Store the mask in a clean plastic, resealable bag if it is not dirty or wet and you plan to re-use it



Remove the mask by the straps when taking it out of the bag



Wash the mask in soap or detergent, preferably with hot water, at least once a day



Clean your hands after removing the mask

Don'ts →



Do not use a mask that looks damaged



Do not wear a loose mask



Do not wear the mask under the nose



Do not remove the mask where there are people within 1 metre



Do not use a mask that is difficult to breathe through



Do not wear a dirty or wet mask



Do not share your mask with others

A fabric mask can protect others around you. To protect yourself and prevent the spread of COVID-19, remember to keep at least 1 metre distance from others, clean your hands frequently and thoroughly, and avoid touching your face and mask.



World Health Organization