University of Regina
Medical and Non-Medical Masks: Care, Use and Maintenance Guidelines

This document will provide guidance on when masking is appropriate, how to don and doff safely, and frequently asked mask questions.

Covid-19 Control Background

The most effective way to prevent spreading COVID-19 is to wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. If water and soap are not readily available, use hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol base. Other standard measures include:

- Staying home if you are ill
- Maintain a 2-metre physical distance from others.
- Avoid touching your face, mouth, nose, and/or eyes.

Assessing Workplace/Instruction Risk

A risk assessment has been completed for activities on campus to determine which tasks fall in higher risk categories, such as those where physical distancing cannot be maintained. The Chief Medical Officer of Canada has indicated that wearing a homemade non-medical mask/facial covering in the public is recommended for periods of time when it is not possible to consistently maintain a 2-metre distance from others. Cloth or non-medical masks are a recommended measure for use in the community and are not considered personal protective equipment (PPE).

The following situations are appropriate for the use of a mask at the University of Regina:

1. **Voluntary** use of a cloth mask when used properly and safely with correct donning, doffing, and mask care and understanding of limitations. Not to be used as a substitute for personal protective equipment or in place of other controls, such as social distancing, hand washing, barriers or coming to work while ill. If you do choose to wear a non-medical mask on campus, you are asked to follow appropriate use guidelines and understand the recommendations for their use.

   **NOTE**: Cloth masks are not permitted for use in teaching, research and learning activities when a 2 metre distance cannot be maintained. If masks are required for teaching, research, or learning, a disposable medical mask is required. Masks are available at UR Stores RIC.

2. **Mandatory** use of a medical face mask as deemed by a risk assessment where: social distancing is not possible due to the nature of the work, the task cannot be altered or substituted to follow COVID-19 safe work practices, and other engineering/administrative controls (such as barriers or scheduling) are not possible. If a medical mask must be used on campus, proper usage, donning and doffing, and disposal must be followed.
### Appropriate Use of Non-Medical Masks and Face Coverings

When worn properly, a person wearing a non-medical mask or face covering can reduce the spread of their own infectious respiratory droplets. Non-medical face masks should:

- Allow for easy breathing
- Fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- Maintain their shape after washing and drying
- Be changed immediately if damp or dirty
- Be comfortable and not require frequent adjustment
- Be made of at least two layers of tightly woven material fabric (e.g. cotton or linen)
- Be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose and mouth without gaping

Non-medical masks or face coverings should not:

- Be shared with others
- Impair vision or interfere with tasks
- Be placed on children under 2 years of age
- Be made of plastic or other non-breathable materials
- Be secured with tape or other adhesives
- Be made of materials that easily fall apart (e.g. tissues)
- Be placed on anyone unable to remove them without assistance or anyone who has trouble breathing

Limitations:

- Homemade masks are not medical devices and are not regulated like medical masks and respirators. Their use requires attention to their limitations;
- They have not been tested to a recognized standard
- The fabrics are not the same as used in surgical masks or respirators
- The edges are not designed to form a seal around the nose and mouth
- They may not provide protection against virus-sized particles
- They can be difficult to break through and can prevent you from getting the required amount of oxygen and rebreathing exhaled breath.

### How To Put on (don) a Non-Medical Mask or Face Covering

1. Ensure the face covering is clean and dry.
2. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before touching the mask. If hand washing is unavailable use hand sanitizer with a minimum 60% alcohol base.
3. Ensure your hair is away from your face.
4. Place the face covering over your nose and mouth and secure to your head or ears with its ties or elastics. Adjust if needed to ensure nose and mouth are fully covered. The mask should fit snugly to the cheeks and there should not be any gaps.
5. Repeat Step 2.
While wearing a non-medical mask or face covering, it is important to avoid touching your face. If you do touch your mask or face, you should immediately wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. You can also use hand sanitizer with a minimum 60% alcohol base.

**How to Remove (doff) a Non-Medical Mask or Face Covering**

1. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. If hand washing is unavailable, use hand sanitizer with a minimum 60% alcohol base.
2. Remove the face covering by un-tying it or removing the loops from your ears. Avoid touching the front of the mask when removing it. It can be placed in a plastic bag temporarily if you are not at home. Make sure you close or zip seal the bag while storing it.
3. After removing the face covering, repeat Step 1.

**Cleaning and Disposing of Non-Medical Masks and Face Coverings**

If you plan to reuse the mask, wash it before wearing it again. Change your cloth mask as soon as it gets damp or soiled by:

- putting it directly into the washing machine
- washing it with other items using a hot cycle, and then dry thoroughly

Non-medical masks that cannot be washed should be discarded and replaced as soon as they get damp, soiled or crumpled. After use:

- Dispose of masks properly in a lined garbage bin.

**Information for Use on Medical Grade Face Masks**

All activities on campus will have a documented risk assessment completed that will identify if physical distancing protocols cannot be maintained. If required to work/study within a 2-metre radius of one another, medical grade face masks will be available and will be used without exception. Medical face masks are generally used to reduce the risk of pathogen transfer between individuals. Masks accomplish this by covering the mucous membranes of the nose, mouth, and lungs with filtering materials. They can be used as protection against asymptomatic individuals or as a way to contain droplets.

Medical face masks are single-use and should be worn for a limited amount of time. These masks are not respirators and are not designed to create a complete seal and therefore do not protect the wearer from viral particles. Masks should be regarded as contaminated after use and discarded accordingly. When it is safe to do so, masks should be replaced if they become wet, soiled, torn, or dislodged.
How to Put on (don) a Medical Face Mask

1. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before touching the mask. If none is available, use hand sanitizer with a minimum 60% alcohol base.
2. Ensure your hair is away from your face.
3. Draw the mask from the box with the blue side of the mask facing out, and ensure the nosepiece is at the top (thin metal band).
4. Open the pleats and form the nosepiece lightly across the nose and cheekbones.
5. Once the nosepiece is formed, pull the ear loops behind your ears.
6. Ensure the mask pleats are opened enough to fully cover the nostrils and mouth.
7. Once the mask is on comfortably, press along the nosepiece to form a snug fit against the face.

How to Take off (doff) a Medical Face Mask

1. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before touching the mask. If none is available, use hand sanitizer with a minimum 60% alcohol base.
2. Remove protective eyewear (if used) and disinfect.
3. Remove medical face mask by grasping the ear loops and pulling out to clear the ears.
4. Discard the used mask in the garbage while ensuring not to touch the front or inside of the mask on any surface as this is contaminated after use.

Medical face masks have been sourced and are available through UR Stores (ur.stores@uregina.ca) located in Research & Innovation Centre, RC 110.

Q. What are the standards for medical face masks?

A. A 3-ply medical face mask usually contains a layer of melt-blown material between two layers of non-woven layer, the number of layers does not correlate with the bacterial filtration efficiency nor the fluid resistance of a mask. Manufacturers conduct tests to meet the ASTM or EN14683 standards before marketing medical grade face masks in the United States or Europe.

FDA required manufacturers to conduct the following tests:

- Fluid Resistance
- Differential Pressure (Delta P)
- Bacterial Filtration Efficiency (BFE)
- Particle Filtration Efficiency (0.1μm PFE)
- Flammability
Q. Why is the fit so important?

A. A mask is only as effective as its fit. There should be no gaps along the side, around the nose or under the chin that would allow air and droplets to bypass the mask. The mask should always be properly adjusted to fully cover both the mouth and the nose.

Q. Will facial hair affect the effectiveness of a medical face mask?

A. Wearing a medical face mask reduces virus transmission. This is achieved by not allowing airborne particles to leak through the sides of the mask. Facial hair will not allow the face mask to sit directly on the face to create a seal. The space created between your skin and facial hair will interfere with the fit. If you use a face mask, it is recommended that the face is clean shaven for maximum effectiveness.

Q. How do I know if the medical face mask is on correctly?

A. There are three things you should be looking for to ensure the proper fit.
   1. The aluminum nose piece is at the top
   2. The white surface is on the inside (against your skin) and the blue always faces out
   3. The pleats fall downwards and away from the nose

Q. What is the difference between a medical face mask and a respirator?

A. Medical face masks are loose fitting masks that cover the mouth and nose. They are designed to stop large droplets and splashes or sprays.

   A respirator is an item of PPE designed to reduce exposure to airborne contaminants. Known airborne pathogens include TB, SARS, Anthrax, and Hanta virus. Respirators must be individually selected to fit the wearers face and shown to provide a good seal. They also must be certified by NIOSH, and accompanied with a respiratory program including fit testing and training on care, use, and maintenance.

Q. What is the difference between a medical face mask and a surgical/procedural face mask?

A. Medical face masks are also known as surgical and procedural face masks. They are the same type of loose fitting masks that cover the mouth and nose.