



Guidance on Cloth and Non-medical Masks

Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert are currently required to follow mandatory masking guidelines in indoor public spaces to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Effective Monday, November 16, Mandatory masking in indoor public places will be extended to all Saskatchewan communities with populations of 5,000 people or greater.

For residents in other communities, health officials strongly recommend wearing a non-medical mask anywhere outside the home.

1. Why you should wear a mask
2. What kind of mask you should use
3. Tips on how to wear a mask
4. Who should not wear a mask

1. Why you should wear a mask

Indoor Mandatory Masking Requirements

COVID-19 can be transmitted by people who have symptoms, and by people who are infectious but not symptomatic, in the two days before symptoms develop.

Health officials strongly recommend wearing a non-medical mask in the community, even if you have no symptoms. It is an additional measure you can take to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

Masks should be worn when you are in an area where people outside your immediate household are present. Non-medical or cloth masks are important in situations, community settings, and all indoor public places where physical distancing is not possible or is unpredictable.

Wearing a mask in public can be considered an additional line of defense, but does not replace the need for other public health measures that are proven to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Stay home as much as possible, especially if you are sick.

- Practice physical distancing (maintain a minimum of two metres between yourself and others who are not from your household).
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or sanitize your hands with alcohol-based sanitizer for 20 seconds if you have no immediate access to soap and running water.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your elbow.

Wearing a mask reduces community transmission of the COVID-19 virus. High levels of mask usage in other jurisdictions have been associated with reductions in COVID-19 cases.

Many respiratory viruses peak in fall and winter when people spend more time indoors in close contact. In Canada and Saskatchewan, we are already seeing more COVID-19 infections during the fall and winter months.

It is important to note that masks are recommended for outdoor areas as well if two-metre physical distancing cannot be maintained or is unpredictable.

2. What kind of mask you should use

When making or purchasing a cloth mask/face covering, consider the following recommendations:

- Cloth masks should be tailored to fit the user's facial features as much as possible, ensuring that the mask can cover the nose, mouth, and chin areas with few gaps. Additional information on materials to use when making a mask is available from [the Government of Canada](#).
- It is not recommended to coat the outside of a mask with substances like wax to create a barrier. This can make it more difficult to breathe and air is more likely to escape out of the sides of the mask.
- Bandanas and gaitor masks are not appropriate face coverings. They are ineffective at blocking respiratory droplets.

It is strongly recommended that you purchase and keep a supply of masks at home for personal use when a two-metre distance cannot be maintained or is unpredictable. Use them in public indoor spaces (retail areas, places of worship, schools, common areas in workplaces) or when you are in situations such as being on a bus.

It is also a good idea to carry one or two masks with you in case you need to visit a public indoor place.

Face Shields

Face shields are not a substitute for masks. Do not use face shields in place of masks.

Face shields can be used to provide eye protection, as alternative to other forms of approved forms of eye protection, such as goggles or safety glasses.

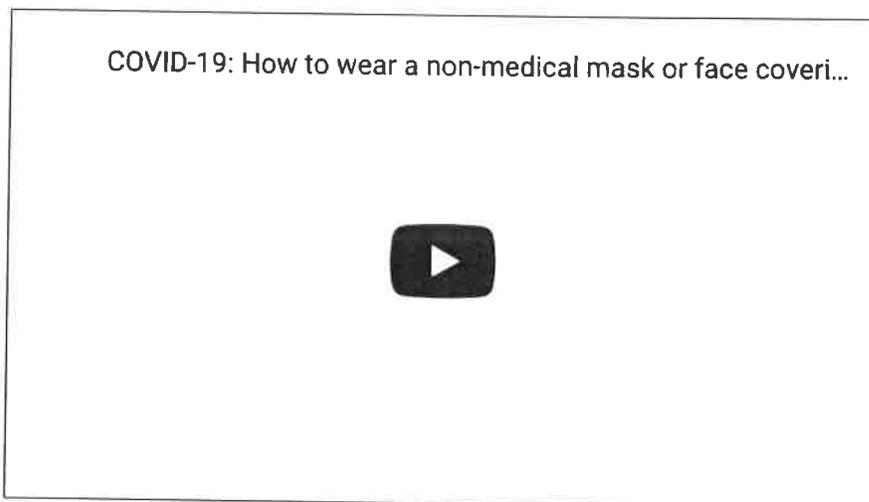
3. Tips on how to wear a mask

People should consider the outside of the mask as contaminated once they put it on.

- Avoid touching, adjusting or moving the mask around with your hands. It is important that the mask is the right fit and sits comfortably on your face.
- Don't share masks with others.
- Reusable cloth masks should ideally be laundered and dried on the highest heat settings at the end of the day.
- If your mask becomes wet, soiled or otherwise damaged, use a fresh one.

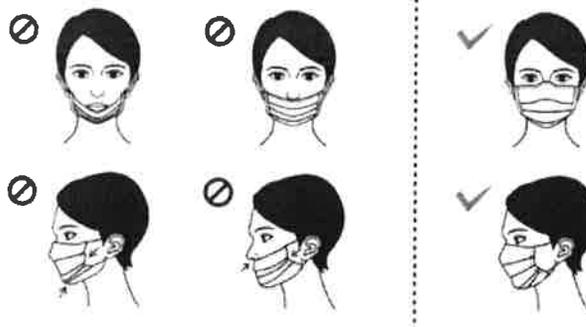
There may be ways to address challenges you have with wearing a mask. Try different styles of masks and practice wearing a mask for short periods of time at home. Canadians who choose to wear a non-medical or cloth mask need to understand their limitations and how to safely use them. Information on how to make a non-medical mask, how to properly put on or remove a non-medical mask, and limitations of non-medical masks can be found on the Public Health Agency of Canada website.

Public Health Agency of Canada: COVID-19: How to wear a non-medical mask or face covering properly



How to Correctly Wear a Mask

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before and after touching the mask.
- Use the ear loops or ties to put on and remove the mask.
- Ensure your nose and mouth are fully covered, and that there are no gaps.
- Don't touch the mask while wearing it.



[saskatchewan.ca/COVID19](https://www.saskatchewan.ca/COVID19)

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4. Who should not wear a mask

The following groups **should not** wear a cloth or non-medical mask.

- Children under the age of 2;
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance;
or
- Persons actively engaged in physical exercise