Breaking News (13/07/2020)

Recommendation on wearing a mask

The Chief Health Officer recommends that adults living in areas under Stage 3 restrictions wear a face mask when outside your home if it is difficult to keep 1.5 metres apart from other people.

If you live an area under Stage 3 restrictions and are leaving home for one of the four reasons, you should wear a face mask such as a cloth mask or surgical mask if it is difficult to keep 1.5 metres apart from others.

Wearing a face mask protects you and your community by providing an additional physical barrier to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Keeping 1.5 metres between yourself and others and washing your hands are still the best defences against coronavirus (COVID-19).

There are two types of face masks suitable for community use: cloth masks and surgical masks.

The recommendation to wear a face mask does not apply to children (people aged under 18 years), individuals with breathing difficulties, and those who have physical conditions that make it difficult to wear a face mask.

There will be no enforcement on the use of face masks. You will not be fined if you don't wear one.

Proper use of face mask

Face masks are being recommended now as a result of the higher number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases currently occurring across areas under Stage 3 restrictions. Wearing a face mask provides an additional physical barrier and helps to reduce community transmission.

Wearing a face mask helps keep you and others safe. Coronavirus (COVID-19) is spread from close contact with an infected person and can be spread when a person coughs or sneezes.

The best way to protect other people against coronavirus (COVID-19) is keeping 1.5 metres apart, wash your hands often, and cough or sneeze into your elbow or tissue. Face masks add an additional protective physical barrier to protect you and your loved ones.

The term 'face mask' includes cloth masks and single-use face masks (commonly called surgical masks). Both masks are suitable for use to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

You can purchase cloth masks or surgical masks from retail outlets including chemists, hardware stores and other shops or you can follow our directions to make your own cloth mask.

Cloth masks

Cloth masks are any nose and mouth covering made of washable fabric. We recommend a cloth mask made of three layers of a mix of breathable fabrics to ensure adequate protection, including a water-resistant outer layer. It does not need to be surgical quality to be effective.

A cloth mask can be washed and re-used. It is a good idea to have at least two, so you will always have a clean one available.

On a single trip away from home there might be times when you can't maintain 1.5 metres distance from other people and wear a cloth mask, and times when you can maintain the distance and don't need to wear a cloth mask. For instance, you might take crowded public transport to and from work, but at work be able to maintain appropriate distancing. Don't reuse the same cloth mask to go home that you used earlier on the same trip to go to work. Put each used cloth mask into a zip lock bag to be taken home for washing. For each new situation put on a clean cloth mask.

Carry a paper bag or zip lock bag with you to carry clean masks and keep them clean.

A cloth mask should be washed each day after use. However, if during the day your mask is visibly dirty or wet, do not continue wearing your mask; the mask needs to be washed.

Re-using a cloth mask without washing is risky because it can become contaminated or may not be as effective in protecting you.

Cloth masks can be washed in the washing machine with other clothes, or hand-washed using soap and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth.

Your cloth mask should be dry before re-using it. You can use the heat setting on your dryer or lay out flat to air dry. If possible, place the cloth mask in direct sunlight.

Wash your hands after handling used face masks.

HOW TO WEAR A NON-MEDICAL FABRIC MASK SAFELY

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

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.

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HOW TO WEAR A NON-MEDICAL FABRIC MASK SAFELY

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.

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Surgical masks

Surgical masks are made with a non-woven meltblown polypropylene layer and available in various levels of protection. These are single use masks only so can't be washed and used again.

Carry a paper bag or zip lock bag with you to carry clean masks and keep them clean.
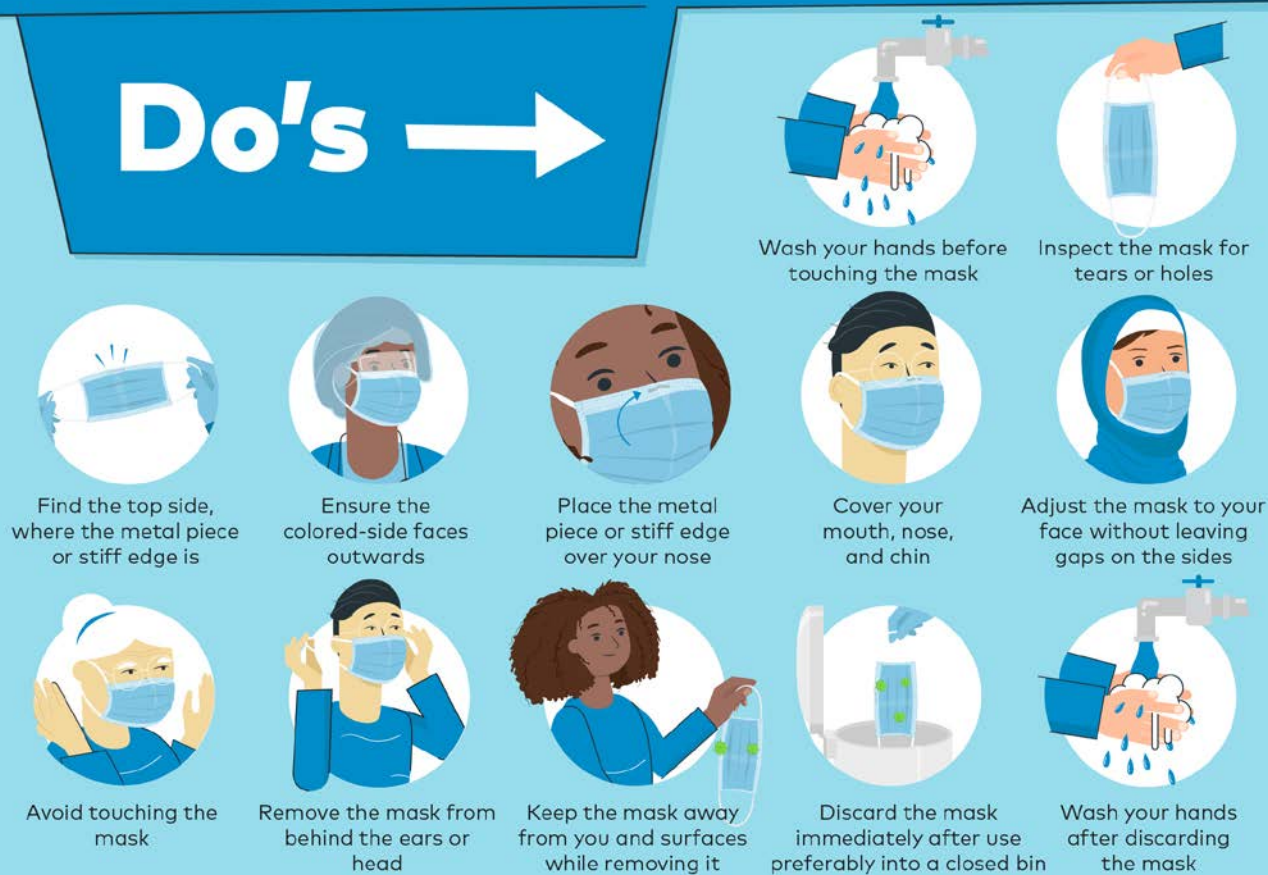
Single use masks are for single-use only and should be disposed of responsibly in the rubbish bin.

Wash your hands after handling used face masks.

There are other types of masks and respirators (such as P2 or N95). These are not recommended for use in the community and not advised to be used outside of healthcare or specific industries under health advice.

HOW TO WEAR A MEDICAL MASK SAFELY

Do's →

Wash your hands before touching the mask

Inspect the mask for tears or holes

Find the top side, where the metal piece or stiff edge is

Ensure the colored-side faces outwards

Place the metal piece or stiff edge over your nose

Cover your mouth, nose, and chin

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

Avoid touching the mask

Remove the mask from behind the ears or head

Keep the mask away from you and surfaces while removing it

Discard the mask immediately after use preferably into a closed bin

Wash your hands after discarding the mask

Remember that masks alone cannot protect you from COVID-19. Maintain at least 1 metre distance from others and wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, even while wearing a mask.

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HOW TO WEAR A MEDICAL MASK SAFELY

Don'ts →

Do not use a ripped or damp mask

Do not wear the mask only over mouth or nose

Do not wear a loose mask

Do not touch the front of the mask

Do not remove the mask to talk to someone or do other things that would require touching the mask

Do not leave your used mask within the reach of others

Do not re-use the mask

Remember that masks alone cannot protect you from COVID-19. Maintain at least 1 metre distance from others and wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, even while wearing a mask.

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**Remember to clean your hands thoroughly with water and soap or alcohol based hand rub before and after every contact with the mask!

**Stay safe by washing your hands regularly, coughing and sneezing into your elbow, keeping at least 1.5 metres from others and staying home if you feel unwell.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) get tested**

Source: https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/face-masks-covid-19#where-can-i-get-a-face-mask

https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks