



Other cloth Face Mask points.

A face mask is a simple, effective way to reduce spread of COVID-19.

People can be infected and have no symptoms, so you cannot tell who around you is infected. *You* may be infected and not know it. Coronaviruses can be breathed out without even coughing or sneezing, so this makes it easy to spread. As we resume social activities such as going to the shops and to work, the risk of COVID-19 transmission will increase.

You can help stop the spread by:

1. Keeping a distance of at least 1.5m between you and others
2. Downloading and using the COVIDSafe App
3. Wearing a face mask
4. Washing your hands
5. Using disinfectant regularly in your home.

These things have been proven to work. Keeping your distance reduces the work of COVID-19 by 82%. Wearing a mask reduces your risk by 85-67% depending on the mask. A surgical mask and a 12-layered cotton mask can reduce your risk by 67%. If you can get a surgical mask, this is the best option for use in the community. They are single use devices, and ideally, you should not re-use them.

If this is too expensive, then you can purchase a cloth mask online, which can be washed and re-used. We recommend you buy at least two, so you will always have a clean one.

You can also make a cloth mask. Not all cloth masks are equal, though. A single layered cloth mask will not give you much protection, and nor will a scarf over your mouth and nose. If you follow the principles of good mask design, you can make a reasonably protective mask at home. Some designs require sewing, and others do not. If buying a cloth mask online, also check for the following features.

Good design of a cloth mask

A cloth mask should provide a physical barrier, some filtration, good fit around the face and should have:

Multiple layers (at least 3)

Water resistant outer layer (synthetic fabric such as polyester)

Absorbent inner layer (cotton)

High thread count and fine weave

Ties (which tie at the back of the head) rather than ear loops. If using a mask with ear loops, you can get a plastic clip to join the ends together at the back of your head.

Fit around the face – a nylon stocking tied over the mask and around the back of the head will provide good fit.

Does not have a valve – this can result in breathing out the virus if you are infected.

Retains properties after multiple washes

Where to use a mask?

Wear a mask in crowded public places, like on public transport, at the shops or the cinema. Carry a paper bag or zip lock bag with you, and place the mask in there when not in use, to keep it clean.

Studies also show that wearing a mask at home reduces spread – a lot of spread does happen in families, so if someone in your family is at risk, or has been a contact, a mask can help. So can using disinfectant to clean high touch surfaces daily inside the house.

Washing your mask

A cloth mask must be washed each day after use – it can be washed in the washing machine with other clothes, or hand-washed with warm water and soap. It should be dry when re-using it. Re-using without washing is risky because the mask can become contaminated.

Sterilising a single-use disposable mask

While this is not recommended, you can spray it with a disinfectant spray such as Glen 20 after use and hang it in the sun to dry. You can also purchase a UVC sterilisation box online which can be used to sterilise it. Sterilising and re-using it more than about 5 times may degrade the material and render it non-effective.