



## Renfrew County and District Health Unit

# COVID-19 FACT SHEET

## Use of Non-Medical Masks

### Why should you consider the use of a non-medical mask?

Non-medical masks, or homemade face coverings, may reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 to those around you. **Non-medical masks should not replace physical distancing.** Examples of non-medical masks may include sewn cloth face masks, bandanas, scarfs, neck warmers, etc.

### When should you wear a non-medical mask?

- **If you are sick:** If you are coughing or sneezing, wear a non-medical mask to protect people around you from getting sick. This is very important if you go to an appointment, clinic, or a hospital. If you are sick, you should not be going out in public for any other reason than to seek medical care. When seeking medical care, follow mask instructions given to you by a health care provider.
- **If you are caring for someone who is sick:** If you are taking care of someone who is coughing or sneezing, wear a non-medical mask when you are within 2 metres (6 feet) of them. The person you are taking care of should also wear a non-medical mask to protect you from their illness.
- **If you are going to a public place:** If you are outside of your home where physical distancing is difficult to maintain, like when visiting the pharmacy or grocery store, consider wearing a non-medical mask. **When wearing a mask in public, continue to practice physical distancing by keeping a 2 metre (6 feet) distance from others.**

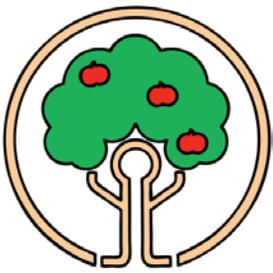
### What should I know about a non-medical mask?

**Always practice physical distancing and hand hygiene when wearing a non-medical mask.**

- Non-medical masks only work when used properly and when combined with frequent hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wearing a non-medical mask may increase your risk of infection if you are frequently touching your face or mask to readjust it.
- Replace the non-medical mask as soon as it is damp, crumpled or dirty.
- Do not share a non-medical mask with another person.
- Wash your non-medical mask with other items using a hot cycle with regular laundry detergent and dry thoroughly.

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- If using a cloth mask, there should be at least two layers of tightly woven fabric, like cotton.
- All face coverings that cannot be cleaned should be thrown out.
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance.

### How to put on a non-medical mask:

- Before touching the non-medical mask, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Move hair away from your face.
- Put the non-medical mask over your mouth and nose and secure it to your head or ears with the ties or elastics. Ensure the mask fits snugly and that there are no gaps on the top of your nose, or around your cheeks and chin.
- Clean your hands again after you put on your mask.
- **Do not touch the non-medical mask once you have it on.** If you need to touch the non-medical mask, wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after you touch the mask.

### How to remove a non-medical mask:

- Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before removing your mask.
- Remove the mask by grasping the ties or ear loops and removing from your ears. Do not touch the front of the mask while removing it.
- Once removed, place your mask temporarily in a plastic bag until you return home, or dispose of it in a lined garbage bin. Do not place the mask in your pocket or purse. If you will be reusing your mask, place it directly into the washing machine when you return home.
- Do not leave your mask in a shopping cart or on the ground.

For instructions on how to make your own cloth mask, visit [www.rcdhu.com](http://www.rcdhu.com).

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