



## How should I wear and care for a fabric mask?

### Using a fabric mask:

- Clean your hands before putting on the mask.
- Inspect the mask for tears or holes, do not use a mask that is damaged.
- Adjust the mask to cover your mouth, nose, and chin, leaving no gaps on the sides.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it.
- Change your mask if it gets dirty or wet.
- Clean your hands before taking off the mask.
- Take off the mask by removing it from the ear loops, without touching the front of the mask.
- Clean your hands after removing the mask.

### Caring for a fabric mask:

- If your fabric mask is not dirty or wet and you plan to reuse it, put it in a clean plastic, resealable bag. If you need to use it again, hold the mask at the elastic loops when removing it from the bag.
- Wash fabric masks in soap or detergent and preferably hot water (at least 60 degrees) at least once a day.
- If hot water is not available, wash the mask in soap/detergent and room-temperature water, followed by either boiling the mask for 1 minute OR; by soaking the mask in 0.1% chlorine for 1 minute and thoroughly rinsing the mask with room temperature water (there should not be any toxic residue of chlorine on the mask).
- Make sure you have your own mask and do not share it with others.

There are potential risks and disadvantages that should be taken into account in any decision-making process on the use of cloth masks:

- Non-medical or fabric masks could increase potential for COVID-19 to infect a person if the mask is contaminated by dirty hands and touched often, or kept on other parts of the face or head and then placed back over the mouth and nose
- Depending on the type of mask used, could cause difficulty in breathing
- They can lead to facial skin breakdown
- They can lead to difficulty with communicating clearly
- They can be uncomfortable to wear
- It is possible that mask use, with unclear benefits, could create a false sense of security in the wearer, leading to diminished practice of recognized beneficial preventive measures such as physical distancing and hand hygiene