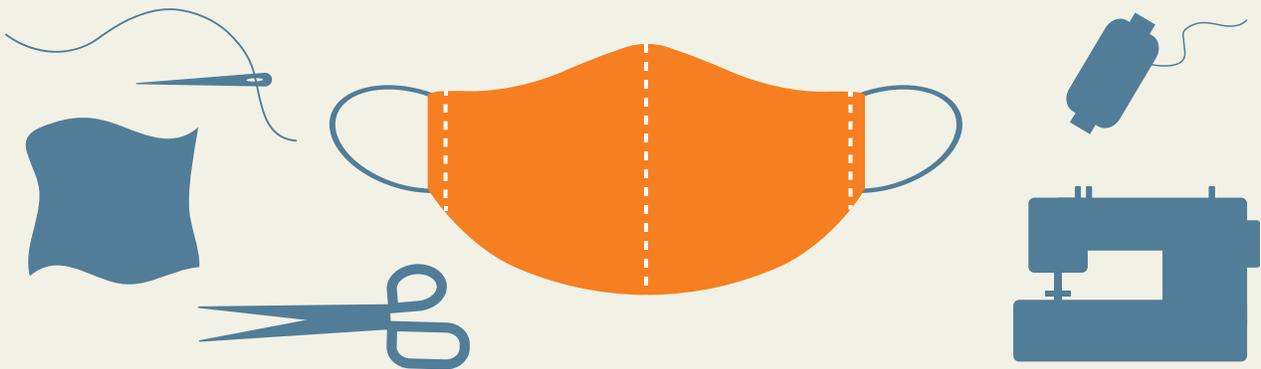




First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Homemade Face Masks

How to Use and Make Masks



Medical face masks, including surgical, medical procedure face masks and respirators (like N95 masks), should be reserved for healthcare workers, first responders and others providing direct care to COVID-19 patients to ensure that communities retain access to health services. Other people should use non-medical, homemade face masks.

What You Need to Know

- Homemade masks can provide some protection to others around you when physical distancing is difficult to maintain i.e., in grocery stores, on public transit etc.
- As some people with COVID-19 can spread the virus before they develop symptoms or when they have only very mild symptoms, a mask may be used at any time
- Homemade masks have not been proven to protect the person wearing the mask
- Everyone needs to follow good mask etiquette to benefit from wearing a mask. This includes:
 - Washing hands before putting on and taking off the mask
 - Never touching or adjusting the mask without immediately cleaning your hands after
 - Not re-using a mask once you have put it on
 - Storing used masks safely until they can be cleaned with hot water and soap

NOTE: non-medical masks alone will not prevent the spread of COVID-19. Everyone must consistently and strictly adhere to good hygiene and public health measures, including frequent hand washing and physical distancing.

USING HOMEMADE FACE MASKS SAFELY

Homemade face masks have limitations and need to be used safely. Non-medical face masks or facial coverings should not be placed on:

- Children under the age of two
- Anyone who has trouble breathing
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance

If you choose to use a homemade face mask:

- Wash your hands immediately before putting it on and immediately after taking it off, in addition to practising good hand hygiene while wearing it
- Ensure the mask fits well (no gaping or holes on the sides of the mask)
- Do not share your face mask with others or take it on and off during a single use

Face masks can become contaminated on the outside or when touched by your hands. When wearing a mask, take the following precautions to protect yourself:

- Avoid touching your face mask while using it
- Change a cloth mask for a fresh one as soon as it gets damp or soiled
- Put masks directly into the washing machine or a bag that can be emptied into the washing machine and then disposed of
- Cloth face masks can be laundered with other items using a hot cycle and then dried thoroughly
- Non-medical face masks that cannot be washed should be discarded and replaced as soon as they get damp, soiled or crumpled

- Dispose of masks properly in a lined garbage bin
- Do not leave used face masks in shopping carts, on the ground, etc.

MAKING HOMEMADE FACE MASKS

- Use clean and stretchy 100 per cent cotton t-shirts or pillowcases. Some materials work better than others
- Ensure that the face mask fits tightly around the nose and mouth. Material that allows droplets to pass through will not work
- The mask should be comfortable otherwise you won't want to wear it consistently
- If the mask makes it a lot harder to breathe, then the seal will not be as good, and the mask will be less effective

RESOURCES

Learn more about making homemade masks [here](#)

Learn more about face masks [here](#)

Learn more about COVID-19 prevention and risks [here](#)



For more information and resources, visit www.fnha.ca/coronavirus