

GUIDANCE ON USING NON-MEDICAL MASKS

The purpose of this document is to provide you with information on selecting, using and caring for non-medical masks. The use of non-medical masks is another way to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, however, it is important to note that wearing a mask should not be a replacement for other measures to protect against COVID-19 such as social distancing and frequent and proper hand washing.

As well, it has not been proven that masks protect the person wearing it (it's not the same as Personal Protective Equipment), however, it can help protect people from being exposed to your germs.

This guidance is based on information from Alberta Health Services and Health Canada.

<p>How to safely put on and wear a mask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Before putting on the mask, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based (min 60%) hand sanitizer. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure your hair is away from your face. People with facial hair can wear a non-medical mask. <input type="checkbox"/> Check the mask for damage. Dispose of it in a garbage if damaged. <input type="checkbox"/> Open the mask fully to cover from the nose to below the chin. <input type="checkbox"/> Place the mask over nose and mouth and secure to your head using the ties or ears with ear loops. It depend on the type of mask you are using. <input type="checkbox"/> If the mask has a nose bar, pinch around your nose to reduce gaps between your face and the mask. <input type="checkbox"/> Adjust if needed. Keep your nose, chin and mouth covered at all times. <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid touching the mask while wearing it as you can introduce contaminants. If you need to adjust your mask, before touching it, wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based (min 60%) hand sanitizer.
<p>How to safely remove a mask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Before your remove the mask, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based (min 60%) hand sanitizer. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not touch the front of the mask. Remove the mask from the ties or ear loops. <input type="checkbox"/> If wearing a disposable mask, discard mask in a lined garbage bin. If wearing a reusable mask, you should have a bag in which you can store the mask, seal it, and make sure it goes into the laundry when you get home. <input type="checkbox"/> Immediately after removing your mask, wash your hand again with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based (min 60%) hand sanitizer. This is important as the mask could have germs on it.
<p>What not to do with your mask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do not touch your face under the mask. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not wear a mask if it is ripped, damaged, visibly soiled, wet or if the ear loops or ties are damaged. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not wear the same mask for long periods of times. It should be changed if damp. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not share masks with another person. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not wear the mask below your nose or chin. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not let the mask give you a false sense of security. Masks are meant to be used in addition to other health and safety measures, including

	<p>social distancing, frequent and proper hand hygiene, and staying home when sick.</p>
<p>Buying and taking care of your masks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase masks with multiple layers (at least 3) of fabric, fits securely against your face, allow for clear breathing and have the ability to be laundered. <input type="checkbox"/> You should always store, use, reuse and/or discard masks in accordance with the directions of the manufacturer if they are available. <input type="checkbox"/> Store your masks in a way that protects them from getting dirty or damaged. Use a clean and sealed bag (a Ziploc bag or similar). <input type="checkbox"/> Place in a dry area of your home. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify or label mask storage bags so that masks are not used by others accidentally.
<p>Masks not recommended to prevent the spread of COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Neck gaiters (or neck warmers) are not recommended because they cannot be secured to the head or ears and are likely to slip off. They are also difficult to remove without contaminating yourself. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you must use a neck gaiter, it should be folded to provide at least 3 layers of fabric. Lift it away from your face especially when taking it off. Wash your hands or use sanitizer each time you adjust it, or especially when you take it off and on. <input type="checkbox"/> Face shields do NOT replace masks or face coverings. Instead they protect the eyes of the person wearing it. Wearing a face shield without a mask will not protect you. <input type="checkbox"/> The use of masks with a one-way valve or exhaust valve should not be used according to Health Canada. These masks may allow respiratory droplets from being released. These should not be used to prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, you can continue using these for activities where a hazard assessment has determined masks with a one-way valve are required. <input type="checkbox"/> Medical masks should continue to be kept for health care workers or others who are providing direct care to COVID-19 patients, people who have a high risk of experiencing severe illness, and people who are performing work on campus where a hazard assessment has identified that a medical mask is required.
<p>How to clean a cloth mask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> To clean, place cloth masks from bag directly into washing machine. If you touch a used mask, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based (min 60%) hand sanitizer. <input type="checkbox"/> Throw out the bag after you have used it to store used masks. <input type="checkbox"/> Launder masks with other items using a hot cycle and then dry thoroughly. <input type="checkbox"/> Inspect the mask prior to reusing it to ensure it has maintained its shape after washing and drying.
<p>When to wear a mask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Masks are mandatory in all public spaces at all Portage College campuses. This includes hallways, stairwells, washrooms, elevators and reception areas. Masks are also required in all public areas of dorms. <input type="checkbox"/> In areas and at times where maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres from others is not possible or difficult. This include outdoor activities. <input type="checkbox"/> In College vehicles with more than one person.



[AHS – Choosing the right non-medical mask](#)
[AHS – How to use a non-medical mask](#)

Updated November 16, 2020

Prepared September 21, 2020 (original)