Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Optimizing the Use of Masks Against COVID-19

> **Masking is one layer in a multi-layer strategy to maximize protection against COVID-19. Other layers include vaccination, staying home when sick, physical distancing, reducing close contacts, gathering outdoors or in well-ventilated indoor places, hand hygiene and regular cleaning.**

Slowing the spread

- COVID-19 variants of concern (e.g., Omicron) spread very easily.
- Masks are one layer in a multi-layer strategy that help protect you and those around you.
- Masks prevent or reduce the spread of respiratory particles.
- Select a mask that fits snugly to your face and is comfortable to wear.

Wear a mask when:

- In crowded places, such as large retail stores or event venues.
- In indoor spaces other than your home.
- In close contact with people, other than your household.

Qualities of a good mask

- Fits well and completely covers your nose, mouth and chin. Fits snugly against the sides of your face and nose with no gaps. A nose bridge wire can help to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask.
- Filters air well. A mask with multiple layers filters virus containing particles.
- Comfortable to wear and easy to breathe through for long periods of time.
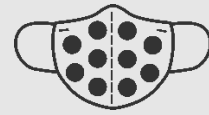
Respirator
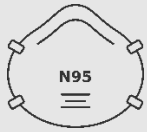
- Meets established filtration standards.
- Provides best fit and filtration when fitted properly.
- Includes N95 and KN95.
- Respirators with exhalation valves should not be used.

Medical mask

- Meets established filtration standards.
- Can provide good fit and filtration.
- Includes surgical and procedure masks.

Cloth mask

- May be less able to ensure good fit and filtration.
- Construction is variable but should be made of 3 layers of material to optimize filtration.

Resources

- Health Canada: Authorized Medical Devices for Uses Related to COVID-19.
- Public Health Ontario: How to Protect Yourself from COVID-19.
- Health Canada: COVID-19 Mask Use: Advice for Community Settings.

Learn about the virus

To learn more and access up-to-date information on COVID-19, visit the Ontario Ministry of Health' website: ontario.ca/coronavirus.

The information in this document is current as of February 9, 2022

Ontario