



Frequently Asked Questions

Why make masks mandatory now?

As more businesses and public spaces open and people increase their contacts, the risk of a rapid rise in infections and outbreaks is ever-present. Increasing scientific evidence supports wearing a mask when in enclosed public spaces as an important measure in reducing COVID-19 transmission, while the risk of rising rates of infection continues.

What happens if I do not wear a mask?

Every Operator of an Enclosed Public Space will have a policy to ensure that no member of the public is permitted to enter or remain in the public areas of the enclosed public space unless they are wearing a mask in a manner that covers their nose, mouth and chin. People in an Enclosed Public Space who remove their mask for extended periods of time, will receive a verbal reminder of the requirement to wear a mask under these instructions

Do I still need to stay 2-metres away from others if I am wearing a mask?

Yes. The person responsible for a business that is open to the public, or an organization responsible for a facility that is open to the public, shall ensure that the place of business or facility is operated to enable members of the public in the place of business or facility to, to the fullest extent possible, maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from other persons. Wearing a mask is not an alternative to physical distancing. Every effort should be made to keep a 2-metre distance even when wearing a mask.

How do I use a mask while wearing glasses/sunglasses?

You may need to take off your glasses before putting on your mask to ensure the mask is placed properly over your nose. Avoid touching your glasses when wearing your mask. If you need to readjust your glasses, ensure you wash your hands using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately before and after touching them. It is recommended that you take off your glasses prior to safely taking off your mask. Only take off your glasses and mask when you can wash your hands using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Your glasses can be washed with soap and water to decrease potential spread of COVID-19.

Do I need to shave off my beard for my mask to be effective?

No, because the purpose of the mask is to “filter” respiratory droplets (blocking droplets travelling in more-or-less a straight line) and a mask with two or more layers fitting securely over the chin without gapping (compressing the beard as necessary) will block respiratory droplets quite well. Remember that wearing a mask does not replace other protective measures such as physical distancing, hand washing, and not touching your face with unwashed hands. Keeping the beard clean is also important. Please note these recommendations do not apply for health-care workers who need to follow the guidelines from the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I take off my mask?

Ensure you wash your hands using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after removing your mask or anytime you wish to adjust your mask. You should take off your mask when: You are safely able to (when physical distancing can be maintained) and the mask can be placed in a lined garbage bin if it is not reusable, in a plastic bag for a short time while transporting it home or directly into the washing machine. It becomes damp or dirty and you can exchange it for a new one if you are still in a situation where you need to wear a mask.

Masks and the heat

Wearing a mask is important to decrease the transmission of COVID-19 in any indoor setting where it may be difficult to maintain at least a two-metre or six feet distance. Wearing a mask outdoors is necessary in situations when proper physical distancing cannot be maintained. Although wearing masks may become more uncomfortable in hot temperatures, they will still work. You may need to change your mask more frequently in hot and humid temperatures as it may become damp more quickly. Plan outdoor activities for the coolest times of the day and take breaks in the shade or cool environment if you find wearing a face mask uncomfortable in the heat. Outdoor workers: For people undertaking physical exertion in heat, a mask can make the effort more difficult. Decreasing intensity and volume of work, taking more frequent rests and taking more cooling breaks may be necessary. Discuss with your employer.

Should I wear a mask when I exercise?

Wearing a mask when exercising may not be possible because of higher heart and breathing rates. Exercising without a mask is safer outdoors if there are people around who are not from your own household. If you are exercising outdoors, briefly passing someone on the sidewalk or road is not considered a significant risk for exposure to COVID-19. When exercising outdoors (such as jogging, cycling or skateboarding) here are some ways to stay safe:

- Maintain at least a two-metre (six feet) distance from others
- When in single file, spacing needs to increase with speed of movement
- Step-aside or pass others quickly and courteously on sidewalks
- If you are with others, travel in single file to allow others to pass safely
- If possible, consider using shared paths and sidewalks when it's less busy

How can I make a mask/face covering?

For details on how to make your own mask/face covering(s), visit:

- Health Canada's website for sew or no-sew instructions on how to make a home-made mask
- Public Health Agency of Canada's How to make a non-medical mask at home
- CHEO's Kids and masks: tips from an expert