# Guidelines for Wearing and Removing Face Mask

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1. **What is a face mask and what is it used for?**

A face mark, also known as a surgical or medical mask, is a facial covering worn to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases. A person who is ill wears a face mask to lessen the number of infectious particles (germs) released into the air when s/he breathes, speaks, coughs, or sneezes. This type of mask provides limited protection against inhaling germs.

Face masks should have three layers: an outer fluid-repelling layer, a middle germ protecting layer and an inner moisture-absorbing layer. A face mask without such a manufacturing standard should not be used, as protection against infectious agents could be compromised.

![Figure 1. Illustration of the three layers of a face mask](https://www.facemask.supply/2020/01/01/illustration-of-three-layer-design-surgical-mask/)

2. **How long does a face mask remain effective?**

A face mask, if properly worn, will be effective for 8 hours or until it becomes wet or contaminated (e.g. through touching).
3. How to wear and remove a face mask correctly

The following steps should be followed to put on and take off a face mask.

How to put on a face mask

1. **Perform hand hygiene** with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask.
2. **Check the mask** to make sure there are no obvious tears or holes in either side of the mask, and that it is not wet or dirty.
3. Determine which side of the mask is **the top**. The side of the mask with a stiff bendable edge is the top. The bendable edge is meant to mould to the shape of your nose.
4. Determine which side of the mask is **the front**. The coloured side of the mask is usually the front (i.e. should face away from you). The white side of the mask should touch your face.
5. Follow the instructions below for the type of mask you are using.
   - **Face Mask with Ear loops**: Hold the mask by the ear loops. Place a loop around each ear.
   - **Face Mask with Ties**: Bring the mask to your nose level and place the ties over the crown of your head and secure with a bow. Then take the bottom ties, one in each hand, and secure with a bow at the nape of your neck.
   - **Face Mask with Bands**: Hold the mask in your hand with the nosepiece or top of the mask at fingertips, allowing the headbands to hang freely below hands. Bring the mask to your nose level and pull the top strap over your head so that it rests over the crown of your head. Pull the bottom strap over your head so that it rests at the nape of your neck.
6. Once the mask is secured to your face, mould or pinch the stiff edge to the shape of your nose.
7. Pull the bottom of the mask over your mouth and chin.

How to remove a face mask

1. **Perform hand hygiene** with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask. **Avoid touching the front of the mask**. The front of the mask is contaminated. **Touch only the ear loops/ties/band**.
2. Follow the instructions below for the type of mask you are using.
   - **Face Mask with Ear loops**: Hold both of the ear loops and gently lift and remove the mask.
   - **Face Mask with Ties**: Untie the bottom bow first then untie the top bow and pull the mask away from you as the ties are loosened.
   - **Face Mask with Bands**: Lift the bottom strap over your head first then pull the top strap over your head.
3. Throw the mask in a closed waste container.
4. Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
Reference and Bibliography


Annex 1: How to wear and remove a facemask correctly

How to wear and remove a surgical mask correctly

Surgical masks help to limit the spread of germs. It is recommended to wear a mask if you are unwell to prevent others from getting infected.

It is equally important to learn how to wear and remove a surgical mask correctly.

Source: https://www.pantai.com.my/coronavirus
Annex 2: Dos and Don'ts for wearing a face mask

**HOW TO WEAR A MEDICAL MASK SAFELY**

**Do's**
- Wash your hands before touching the mask
- Inspect the mask for tears or holes
- Find the top side, where the metal piece or stiff edge is
- Ensure the colored-side faces outwards
- Place the metal piece or stiff edge over your nose
- Cover your mouth, nose, and chin
- Adjust the mask to your face without leaving gaps on the sides
- Avoid touching the mask
- Remove the mask from behind the ears or head
- Keep the mask away from you and surfaces while removing it
- Discard the mask immediately after use preferably into a closed bin
- Wash your hands after discarding the mask

**Don'ts**
- Do not use a ripped or damp mask
- Do not wear the mask only over mouth or nose
- Do not wear a loose mask
- Do not touch the front of the mask
- Do not remove the mask to talk to someone or do other things that would require touching the mask
- Do not leave your used mask within the reach of others
- Do not re-use the mask

Remember that masks alone cannot protect you from COVID-19. Maintain at least 1 metre distance from others and wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, even while wearing a mask.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mask Type</th>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Filtration Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Use Face Mask</td>
<td>China: YY/T0969</td>
<td>3.0 Microns: ≥95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.1 Microns: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical Mask</td>
<td>China: YY 0469</td>
<td>3.0 Microns: ≥95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USA: ASTM F2100</td>
<td>0.1 Microns: ≥95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.1 Microns: ≥98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Europe: EN 14683</td>
<td>0.1 Microns: ≥98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.0 Microns: ≥95%</td>
<td>3.0 Microns: ≥98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.1 Microns: ≥95%</td>
<td>0.1 Microns: ≥98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.0 Microns: ≥95%</td>
<td>3.0 Microns: ≥98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.1 Microns: ≥95%</td>
<td>0.1 Microns: ≥98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>Type II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.0 Microns: ≥95%</td>
<td>3.0 Microns: ≥98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.1 Microns: X</td>
<td>0.1 Microns: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.0 Microns: ≥95%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.1 Microns: X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.0 Microns:** Bacteria Filtration Efficiency standard (BFE).

**0.1 Microns:** Particle Filtration Efficiency standard (PFE).

**0.3 Microns:** Used to represent the most-penetrating particle size (MPPS), which is the most difficult size particle to capture.

**X:** No requirements.