

Guidelines for Wearing and Removing Face Mask

Contents

1. What is a face mask and what is it used for?	2
2. How long does a face mask remain effective?	2
3. How to wear and remove a face mask correctly	3
Annex 1: How to wear and remove a facemask correctly	5
Annex 2: Dos and Don'ts for wearing a face mask	6

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

A face mask, 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.

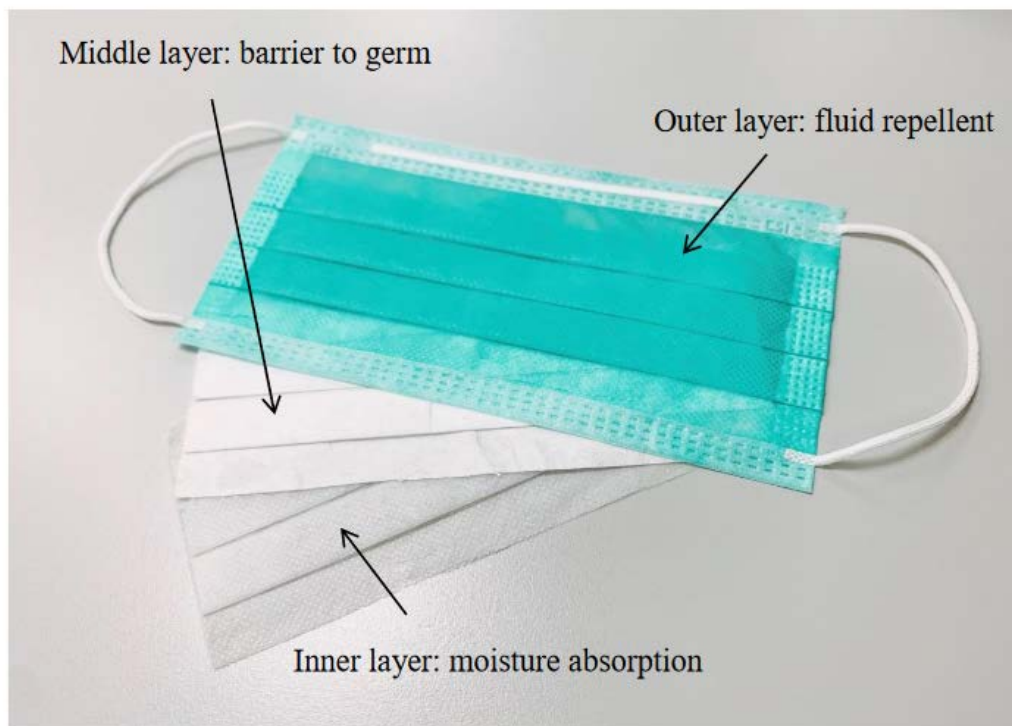


Figure 1. Illustration of the three layers of a face mask

Source: <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

1. How to Put on and Remove a Face Mask [Internet]. Disease Prevention and Control, San Francisco Department of Public Health. 2020 [cited 2020 Apr 29]. Available from: <https://www.sfcddp.org/communicable-disease/healthy-habits/how-to-put-on-and-remove-a-face-mask/>
2. When and how to use masks [Internet]. [cited 2020 Apr 29]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

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.



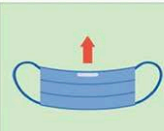
Wearing a mask



Step 1
Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask.



Step 2
Check the mask to make sure there are no obvious tears or holes in either side of the mask.



Step 3
Hold the mask with the stiff bendable strip on top, and the coloured side facing outwards.



Step 4
Ensure that the mask should cover your nose, mouth and chin.



Step 5
Mould or pinch the nose strip to conform to the shape of your nose.

Removing a mask



Step 1
Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask.



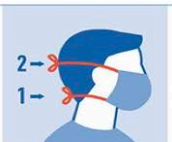
Step 2
Avoid touching the front of the mask because it is contaminated. Only touch the ear loops/ties/band.



Step 3
Remove mask according to the type of mask you are using.



Face Mask with Ear Loops
1. Hold both ear loops.
2. Unhook and gently lift to remove the mask.



Face Mask with Ties
1. Untie the bottom bow first followed by the top bow.
2. Pull the mask away from you as the ties are loosened.



Face Mask with Bands
1. Lift the bottom strap over your head.
2. Pull the top strap over your head.



Step 4
Throw the mask in the trash.



Step 5
Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching anything else.

Annex 2: Dos and Don'ts for wearing a face mask

HOW TO WEAR A MEDICAL MASK SAFELY

who.int/epi-win

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.




Mask Type	Standards	Filtration Effectiveness		
Single-Use Face Mask 	China: YY/T0969	<small>Open-Data Tests Smart Air SmartAirFilters.com</small> 3.0 Microns: ≥95% 0.1 Microns: ❌		
Surgical Mask 	China: YY 0469	3.0 Microns: ≥95% 0.1 Microns: ≥30%		
	USA: ASTM F2100	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
		3.0 Microns: ≥95% 0.1 Microns: ≥95%	3.0 Microns: ≥98% 0.1 Microns: ≥98%	3.0 Microns: ≥98% 0.1 Microns: ≥98%
	Europe: EN 14683	Type I	Type II	Type III
3.0 Microns: ≥95% 0.1 Microns: ❌		3.0 Microns: ≥98% 0.1 Microns: ❌	3.0 Microns: ≥98% 0.1 Microns: ❌	

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.

❌: No requirements.

Source: <https://smartairfilters.com/en/blog/comparison-mask-standards-rating-effectiveness/>