



## Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 16 – April 13 - April 17, 2020

### **COVID-19 Masks**

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#### **Introduction**

Over the past few weeks, you may have noticed an increased amount of people wearing masks in public. There has been a lot of conflicting and sometimes confusing information provided by social and news media. This week we will discuss when it's necessary to wear a mask, how to properly handle a mask, and the different types.

#### **Monday – When to wear masks to protect against the coronavirus**

When to wear a mask:

- If you are taking care of a person with suspected 2019-nCoV infection.
- If you are coughing or sneezing.
- When used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

#### **Tuesday – How to wear a mask to protect against coronavirus**

How to properly wear a face mask:

- Before putting on a mask, ensure your hands are clean. Use an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
- Avoid touching the mask while using it as touching the outside can transfer germs onto your hands.
- Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and do not re-use single-use masks.
- To remove the mask, remove it from behind, discard immediately in a closed bin, and clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

#### **Wednesday – Surgical masks**

Now that we've discussed the when and how, let's discuss the surgical face mask.

A surgical mask is a loose-fitting and disposable device that creates a physical barrier between your body and potential contaminants in the environment.

If worn properly, a surgical mask is meant to help block large particles that contain germs from reaching your mouth and nose. Surgical masks may also help reduce exposure of your saliva and respiratory secretions to others. However, a surgical mask does not provide complete protection due to its loose fit.

Surgical masks should only be used once and disposed of. Never reuse a mask. Remember to always wash your hands after disposing of a used mask.



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#### **Thursday – N95 face mask**

Yesterday we discussed the details and use of the surgical face mask. Today we will discuss N-95 masks and how they can benefit you.

- An **N95 respirator** is a respiratory protective device designed to achieve a very close facial fit and very efficient filtration of airborne particles.
- The 'N95' designation means that when subjected to testing, the respirator blocks at least 95 percent of very small test particles.
- All FDA-cleared N95 respirators are single-use devices. Never reuse a respirator. Dispose of all used devices properly and wash your hands afterwards.

#### **Friday – Cloth face coverings**

Manufactured face masks including surgical and N95 are in high demand to provide proper protection for our health care providers who are on the front line providing critical medical care to our citizen. When supplies are scarce, sometimes it's necessary to get creative to find an alternative. Today we will discuss the use of homemade cloth face coverings as a viable alternative to manufactured face masks.

Cloth face coverings should—

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape
- be washed regularly depending on the frequency of use