Queensland Health

Queensland Government

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Face masks in Queensland

Face masks can help to stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), especially in places where it is difficult to stay 1.5 metres away from other people. Example of these places includes:

- large crowds
- a house where a lot of people live
- on a bus or train.

You may have to wear a mask in Queensland when:

- you are entering a hospital
- you are visiting a residential aged care facility in a restricted area
- you are visiting a disability accommodation service in a restricted area
- your doctor or nurse has told you to
- you are expecting to get tested for COVID-19.

It is important to wash your hands often and stay two big steps away from others. Try not to hug, kiss and shake hands with other people.

How to wear a mask

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

Step 2
Spread out the folds of the mask by pulling the top and bottom of the mask apart.

Step 3
Hold the mask with the coloured side away from you. The side of the mask that has a stiff bendable edge should be at the top.

Step 4
Put the mask over your nose and mouth. Mould the stiff edge to the shape of your nose.

Step 5
Tie up the top strings first in a bow at the back of your head. The top strings sit above your ears.

Step 6
Tie the bottom strings in a bow. Ensure the strings sit beneath your ears.

Step 7
This is how your mask should look when you are finished.

Step 8
Be mindful that you do not touch the mask once you have it on.

1. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitiser before you put on your mask.
2. Hold the mask by its tapes or loops, then tie the mask around your head or put the loops around your ears.
3. Make sure the mask fully covers your mouth and nose. Make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask. If you are using a surgical mask, press the nose piece around your nose.

Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth or the front of the mask while wearing it. If you have worn the mask for the period of time required, and you are no longer in need to wear it, throw it in the bin. If possible, throw your mask away in a sealed bag. Wash your hands immediately after throwing the mask in the bin.

Recommended types of face masks or other face coverings

The best face mask is a single-use surgical mask – you can purchase these at pharmacies. If you cannot get a surgical mask, any paper or cloth mask is fine to use. The most effective cloth masks are made up of at least 3 layers. If you still can't find a cloth mask, a bandana or scarf may assist, as long as you are able to cover your nose and mouth properly.

Make your own cloth mask

You can make your own cloth mask. Use the Australian Government's helpful resource (PDF) if you want to know the best way to make a face mask.

Washing a reusable cloth face mask

Cloth masks should be washed after every use.

They can be washed in the washing machine with other clothes, or handwashed using soap and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth. Dry the cloth mask in the clothes dryer or in fresh air (on cloth line) before you re-use it.

Wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitiser after handling used face masks.

How often to change your face mask

You should not re-use a surgical mask.

You can wash and re-use cloth masks. It is a good idea to have at least two, so you will always have a clean one available.

As you travel or visit a place away from home, there might be times when you can't stay 1.5 metres away from other people and you will need to wear a mask. There will be times when you can maintain the distance and don't need to wear a mask. If you wore a mask in the morning on your way to work, for example, you should not re-use this same mask on your way home.

Throw used surgical masks in the bin or store used cloth masks in a plastic bag until you can wash them.

Re-using a cloth mask without washing it might spread COVID-19 to others or even yourself if it has been contaminated since you last wore it. For each new situation, put on a clean mask. Carry your clean masks in a plastic or paper bag to keep them clean.

Need more information?

Call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84) and ask for an interpreter if you need language support. It is free.

Mental health help

If you feel worried, scared or sad about COVID-19 you can phone 1300 MH CALL (1300 64 22 55) or contact Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre (open Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 4.30 pm) on 1800 188 189. You can also ask for an interpreter if you need one