

## Use and care of non-medical facemasks

### How to clean a non-medical mask

- Wash mask using the directions on the original material (for example, if the mask was made from t-shirt material, follow the washing instructions on the t-shirt tag) but in general, warmer water is better.
- Dry the mask completely (in the dryer using a warm/hot setting if possible).
- Note: Masks can also be washed by hands with soapy water – do let it dry completely before wearing again



### General information

- Inspect your mask prior to wearing it (look for tears or holes).
- Any damage, fabric break down, or change in fit will reduce the already limited protection of cloth masks.
- Replace and wash your mask whenever it becomes damp or dirty.
- Do not shake dirty masks to minimize spreading germs and particles through the air.
- Place dirty masks in a designated bag to contain the germs.  
Tip: Have a bag for your clean masks and a bag for your dirty masks.
- If dirty cloth masks have been in contact with someone who is sick, they can still be washed with other people's laundry.

### Preventing the spread of COVID-19

- Masks can have a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. This is because masks act as a barrier and help stop the spread of droplets from a person's mouth and nose when talking, laughing, yelling, singing, coughing, or sneezing.
- Wearing a mask should be combined with other important preventative measures such as frequent hand washing and physical distancing. Using only a mask is not enough to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### Safety Tips

- Homemade or non-medical cloth masks should be cleaned and changed often.
- Avoid touching the outside of the facemask (while wearing or carrying it).
- Remove mask by using the ear loops or ties.
- Store your reusable mask in a paper bag or plastic bag until you wear it.

### Disclaimer

- Wearing a cloth mask might not protect you from COVID-19, but it is a good option in situations where you cannot keep a safe distance from others for an extended period of time, such as when you are on transit, getting a haircut or visiting someone indoors.

Resources:

[BC Centre for Disease Control](#)

[Public Health Agency of Canada - How to safely use a non-medical mask covering](#)