

Covid-19 Guidance: How to put on and remove a mask safely when you are blind or partially sighted

This guide has been written by blind and partially sighted people working with Sight Loss Councils.

From the 15th June the government have made it compulsory that you wear a face mask or face covering when you access public transport, hospitals or other health settings. It is also advisable to wear a face covering when in shops to ensure the safety of yourself and those around you

If you need to purchase a face mask or face covering, many are available in local pharmacies or through credible online shopping sites such as Amazon.

It is important to understand that wearing a face mask does not make you immune from catching COVID-19, but it does act as a layer of protection and can reduce the risk of contracting it if worn properly.

There are a range of masks available to buy, and although they may vary in their design, they all perform the same role of covering your mouth and nose at the same time to protect you from breathing in the coronavirus droplets.

Putting on a Mask

For the purposes of this guidance sheet we will look at the most common mask in use, namely, “the surgical mask” worn by most NHS workers

- These masks are non-reusable.
- They have two elasticated loops at either side.

- The front of the mask has pleated folds in it, that should be facing downwards and outwards when you put it on.
- Please remember to wash your hands before you put a face mask/covering on. It is also advisable not to wear earrings as they can become entangled in the elasticated loops that go around your ears.
- With the pleats in the mask pointing down and outwards, take hold of the elasticated loops and place them behind your ears. This should secure the mask to your face.
- Ensure that the tapered bottom sits under your chin. This is important, so the mask does not ride up and expose your mouth.
- Pull the mask up so it covers both of your nostrils and sits on your nose as well as covering your mouth. This should now create a seal

from your chin all the way up so that it covers your nose.

- Readjust the mask so that it sits comfortably and is secure on your face and around your ears.
- Avoid touching your mask / face once it is on as this could cause cross contamination.
- You do not need to remove your mask to be heard speaking.
- Surgical masks are non-reusable so should be disposed of once it has been removed.
- To take a mask off safely, take both hands onto your ears, locate the elastic loops and simultaneously bring your hands forward holding the loops and remove the mask in one movement ensuring you do not touch the front of the mask. Again,

this is to avoid cross contamination.

- Dispose of the mask immediately into a bin and wash your hands straight away.

Note

Some facial coverings are reusable, but these will be identified as such on any packaging. If this is the case, instead of throwing it away wash and dry the mask

ready for use again by following the manufacturer's instructions.

The principals of putting a mask on and taking it off again will be the same as above.

It may be useful to practice putting your mask on and taking it off indoors in a familiar environment until you feel confident that you are doing it right.

It is important not to share a reusable mask with another person even after washing.



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