



Face Masks: How they protect you and when to use them

If there is a rise in community transmission of COVID-19 in Australia, some states and territories might recommend or require the use of masks. It's important to stay up to date with the advice in your local area. Your state or territory government will provide this.

Cloth masks are a washable covering and further advice on how to clean them is below. If your cloth mask becomes damp you must remove it, put on a fresh one and put the used one in a plastic bag for washing at the end of the day.

CLEANING YOUR MASK

Cloth masks can be washed in the washing machine with other clothes, or hand-washed using soap and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth.

Dry the cloth mask in the clothes dryer or in fresh air before you re-use it.

Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub (made up of over 60% alcohol or 70% isopropanol) after handling used face masks.

TYPES OF MASK	EXAMPLE	PROTECTION	TYPE OF PROTECTION	USED BY
Particulate filter respirators	P2 or equivalent (N95/KN95)	Airborne transmission prevention	Wearer protection good/Not recommended for source control	Health Care Workers (HCWs) only, mainly recommended for aerosol generating procedures
Medical-grade masks	Surgical masks (Levels 1, 2, and 3)	Droplet protection	Wearer protection (in health care setting) reasonable/Source control good	HCWs who are not performing an aerosol generating procedure or involved in other risk assessed

TYPES OF MASK	EXAMPLE	PROTECTION	TYPE OF PROTECTION	USED BY
				procedure or situation requiring airborne precautions
Manufactured non-medical grade face coverings including homemade (sewn) coverings (these coverings are not regulated by TGA)	Fabric face coverings e.g., multi-layered cloth coverings made from fabric and reusable woven shopping bags	Limited evidence for protection	Wearer protection possible/Possible source control (note the cleaning advice at the top of this fact sheet)	Public use in community transmission where physical distancing cannot be achieved, not for use with no community transmission
Non-manufactured non-medical grade face coverings	Handkerchief, scarf, bandana	No evidence for protection	Wearer protection unknown/Source control unknown	Public use when a manufactured non-medical grade face covering is not available, and there is community transmission, not for use with no community transmission