

COVID-19



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH



NIGERIA CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL



# Advisory on Use of Cloth Face Masks



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## ADVISORY ON USE OF CLOTH FACE MASKS

COVID-19 is primarily spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. In response to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak in Nigeria, NCDC advises the use of face masks as an additional layer of physical distancing to help block the spread of respiratory droplets from person to person.

Recently, additional measures have been put in place in Nigeria by His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari to help curb community transmission of COVID-19. The Federal Government of Nigeria has mandated the use of face masks or coverings in public. However, restrictions on social and religious gatherings remain in place.

Due to the global shortage of medical face masks several countries are turning to alternatives to medical face masks for the general public. A cloth face mask, made out of everyday fabric can act as a barrier to respiratory droplets but cannot completely protect you from COVID-19.

To protect yourselves and loved ones from COVID-19, cloth face masks must be worn in combination with:

1. Avoiding large gatherings
2. Physical distancing by maintaining a distance of 2 metres between yourself and others
3. Regular handwashing with soap under running water
4. Frequent cleaning of surfaces with soap and water or disinfectants

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### Who Should not Wear a Cloth Mask

Cloth face masks are a convenient substitute to medical face masks for the current global situation but they should NOT be worn by individuals who are at a high risk for complications due to COVID-19. The following groups are advised to wear MEDICAL face masks:

1. Health care workers and those caring for the ill
2. Those experiencing respiratory symptoms like coughing and sneezing
3. The elderly and those with chronic medical conditions

### Dos and Don'ts of Cloth Face Masks

1. DO wash your hands frequently with soap under running water to avoid contamination
2. DO adhere to social distancing measures and stay at home as much as possible
3. DO wear a mask before leaving your home for essential services
4. DO wear masks made with at least 3 layers of fabric
5. DON'T use a cloth face mask on children under the age of 2 years
6. DON'T try on new masks from vendors or wear immediately after purchasing; Wash before first use
7. DON'T reuse a cloth face mask before it has been washed and dried
8. DON'T leave a used face mask on uncleaned surfaces or in the reach of small children while not in use
9. DON'T pull down your mask to cough or sneeze. Use a tissue or your bent elbow over the mask until you can safely remove the mask for washing

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### Handling and Care of Cloth Masks

Because they are reusable, it is very important that cloth face masks are handled and cared for properly to avoid the further spread of infectious agents. Please adhere to the following guidelines for the use of cloth face masks:

1. Make sure the mask has been washed and is unused before first wear
2. Wash your hands with soap under running water before touching the mask. If water is not available, use a hand sanitiser
3. Cover your nose and mouth completely with the mask making sure it fits snugly with no open gaps
4. Avoid touching or adjusting the mask while it is on
5. Wash or sanitise your hands before removing the mask by the straps
6. Wash the mask immediately with soap or detergent and allow to dry completely in the sun
7. Before re-use, iron the mask