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## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON CLOTH MASKS**

**No.31/F2/2020/Health- 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

Reference: CLOTH MASK – BEST PRACTICES no. 31/F2/2020/Health, dt 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

### **1. Why should I use a mask?**

**Ans:** Wearing a face mask helps in 3 ways:

- 1) By blocking the infective particles getting released into the atmosphere from an infected person, when he/ she sneezes or coughs, if he/ she is wearing a face mask.
- 2) By blocking most airborne droplets filled with virus from being inhaled by the person wearing a face mask.
- 3) By preventing the wearer from touching their own mouths and noses.

### **2. What material should I use as a face mask?**

**Ans:** 100% Cotton, with a minimum thread count of 180 or more, and thicker and tighter weave is the fabric of choice. (Usually a cotton T shirt will have a thread count of 40 -50, Shirt- 100- 120, Tea towel- 130- 250, Bedsheet- 200- 400. For the same reason studies have shown a higher filtration efficiency for masks made of 100% cotton tea towels when compared to masks made of 100% cotton T shirts.

### **3. When should I wear the mask?**

**Ans:** Mask should be worn whenever you are in a community setting, especially in situations where you may be near people. These settings include grocery stores and pharmacies. These face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing.

#### **4. Should I wear the mask at home also?**

**Ans:** No, you should not.

#### **5. Do I still need to stay at least 6 feet away from people, if wearing a mask?**

**Ans:** Yes. Wearing face mask is an additional public health measure people should take. It is not a replacement for social distancing, frequent hand cleaning and other everyday preventive actions. A cloth face covering is intended to protect the wearer as well as others from the wearer.

#### **6. Who should not wear the face mask?**

**Ans:** Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children less than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.

#### **7. How often should I change the mask, even if does not get moist?**

**Ans:** The expired air contains moisture. If the cloth mask is used properly, it should get moist within 4-6 hours of use depending upon the physical activity, ambient temperature, climate and other individual factors. It is difficult to measure this variability. Studies on cloth mask use in community settings are warranted to prove its effectiveness and time for removal. Therefore as per the guideline it is advisable to remove the mask when it becomes moist or wet.

#### **8. How do I put on the mask?**

**Ans: -**

- Be sure your mask is comfortable, so that you don't want to keep adjusting the mask.
- Wash your hands, or use hand sanitizer, before putting on the mask.
- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- The material should cover both the nose and mouth.

- Secure the mask with ties.
- Do not touch the outer part of the mask at any time.

### **9. How to remove the mask?**

**Ans:** - When removing, do not touch the outer part of the mask. Remove the mask by grabbing the strings. Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth while removing their face mask. The mask should be put to laundry bag for washing , immediately and separately ( not with other clothes)

### **10. What to do if I feel breathless and I want to remove the mask?**

**Ans:** The work of breathing and the resistance to breathing will normally increase on putting a cloth face mask. It can be felt as a mild suffocation to the wearer. But that is not an indication to remove the mask. But if the symptoms and difficulty are more than that, move out from a public area and remove your mask, as mentioned previously. If the difficulty is not subsiding even after removing the mask, it could be due to some other cause and you need to consult a doctor for the same.

### **11. What to do if I want to drink water or eat food?**

**Ans:** Before wearing the mask, it is advised to have proper food and hydration. In case of wanting to drink or eat, it is recommended that the mask be removed as mentioned previously. After drinking or eating, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or hand sanitizer and put on another fresh and clean mask.

### **12. Should I wash my hand, every time I touch the mask?**

**Ans:** The outer part of the mask will be contaminated. For the same reason, you should not touch the outer part of the mask. If you touch the mask accidentally, you should wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

### **13. What should I do, if my mask gets obviously soiled or wet?**

**Ans:** An obviously soiled or wet mask should be removed as it might do more harm than good in preventing the infection.

**14. What should I do, if my mask accidentally slips off?**

**Ans:** Be sure your mask is comfortable, so that you don't want to have to keep adjusting the mask. Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face and secure it with properly tied ties, while putting on the mask. If the mask accidentally slips off, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or hand sanitizer **before and after** re-adjusting the mask.

**15. What should I do, if I feel like sneezing with mask on?**

**Ans:** You can sneeze or cough with the mask on. One of the main use of the mask is to prevent other people from getting exposed to your droplets.

**16. How to clean my mask?**

**Ans:** Step 1. Launder the mask in the washing machine in HOT water (160 degree Fahrenheit or 71.1 degree Celsius ) using soap or detergent that leaves no residue.

Step 2. Rinse well with fresh water and hang to air-dry.

OR

Step 1. Disinfect masks by soaking for five minutes in a solution of two tablespoons of bleach per quart (liter) of water or 1/3 cup (80 ml) of bleach per gallon (3.84 liter) of water.

Step 2. Rinse well with fresh water and hang to air-dry.

**17. Can I remove my mask for a short duration, to talk to my friend?**

**Ans:** No. Even removing the mask for a shorter duration will put your guard down from preventing yourself from infecting others or getting infected. Remember, even a healthy individual without any symptoms can be a carrier of the disease. Social distancing also should be maintained while having one to one conversation.

**18. What should I do, if I need to make a phone call?**

**Ans:** You should not remove the mask partially or completely while making a phone call. Make sure that your phone is not touching your mask during the process.

**19. Can we share the mask?**

**Ans:** A face mask is a potential source of infection as a significant percentage of the filtered micro particles will be stuck to the outer/ inner part of the face mask. So you should not share the face mask. It can lead to the spread of a wide range of contagious diseases.

For any clarification call DISHA help line: 1056, 0471- 2309250, 0471- 2309255

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