Use Mask Properly

Face mask provides a physical barrier to fluids and large particle droplets. Surgical mask is a type of face mask commonly used. When used properly, masks can prevent infections transmitted by respiratory droplets.

People should wear a mask when they have respiratory infection; need to care person with respiratory infection; or when visiting clinics or hospitals during pandemic or peak season for influenza in order to reduce the risk of infection spread.

Points to note on wearing a surgical mask:

- Choose the appropriate mask size. Child size is available for selection as indicated.
- Perform hand hygiene before putting on a mask.
- The mask should fit snugly over the face:
  - The coloured side of the mask face outwards with the metallic strip uppermost. For those masks without a coloured side, the side with folds facing downwards on the outside, and with the metallic clip uppermost (Image 1).
  - For tie-on surgical mask, secure upper tie at the crown of head. Then secure lower tie at the nape (Image 2). For ear-loops type, position the elastic bands around both ears.
  - Mould the metallic strip over nose bridge and mask should fit snugly over the face (Image 3).
  - Extend the mask to fully cover mouth, nose and chin (Image 4).
- Avoid touching the mask after wearing. Otherwise, should perform hand hygiene before and after touching the mask.
- When taking off tie-on surgical mask, unfasten the tie at the nape first; then unfasten the tie at the crown of head (Image 5). For ear-loops type, hold both the ear loop and take-off gently from face. Avoid touching the outside of face mask during taking-off as it may be covered with germs.
- After taking off the surgical mask, discard in a lidded rubbish bin and perform hand hygiene.
- Change surgical mask at least daily. Replace the mask immediately if it is damaged or soiled.


Annex I

Recommendations on Use of Face Masks during Influenza Pandemic in the Community Setting

During Influenza Pandemic, apart from using mask properly, we should adopt the following preventive measures vigilantly to minimize the risk of getting infection:

(a) Perform hand hygiene frequently and properly.
(b) Perform hand hygiene before touching eyes, nose and mouth.
(c) Maintain respiratory etiquette/ cough manner (Pictures below).
(d) Stay at home if got sick and minimize contact with others
(e) Stay away from possible sources of infection:
   i. Minimize unnecessary social contacts and avoid visiting crowded places. If this is necessary, minimize the length of stay whenever possible. Moreover, person at a high risk of having infection-related complications, e.g. pregnant woman or persons with chronic illnesses are advised to wear face mask.
   ii. Avoid close contact with the infected persons.

Infection Control Branch, Centre for Health Protection 2/2