

MHI – Safety COVID-19 Communication Bulletin

Additional Information on Non-Medical Masks from Ministry of Health

On April 17, 2022 The Saskatchewan Ministry of Health issued the following information related to Use of Non-Medical masks (i.e. cloth masks).

At this time, there is insufficient evidence to rely on cloth masks in workplaces to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. In the absence of medical grade masks, there may be some value in cloth masks as a complimentary measure to evidence based approaches for infection prevention and control, such as hand washing, disinfection practices, self-isolation and testing when symptoms present, and physical distancing.

In alignment with the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Public Health Agency of Canada and the statement of the Chief Medical Health Officers of Canada, the Ministry of Health has provided the following statement about homemade cloth masks (non-medical grade masks) on their website:

While the primary driver of COVID-19 transmission is by people who are symptomatic, there is increasing evidence that some COVID-19 infected people who never develop symptoms or are not yet sick are able to transmit the virus. Sometimes the symptoms are so mild that people don't pay attention to them.

With this emerging information, health officials have agreed that wearing a non-medical grade mask – even if you have no symptoms – is an additional measure you may take to protect others around you, particularly in situations where the recommended physical distancing cannot be maintained (such as on public transit or in grocery stores).

Wearing a non-medical grade mask will not prevent you from getting sick. It is another way of covering your mouth and nose to prevent your respiratory droplets from contaminating others or landing on surfaces.

People should also be aware that masks can become contaminated on the outside or when touched by hands.

- *Avoid moving the mask around or adjusting it often.*
- *Masks should not be shared with others.*

A homemade mask does not replace public health measures that are proven to be effective. The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to continue to:

- *stay home as much as possible;*
- *practice physical distancing;*
- *wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water; and*
- *cover your cough or sneezes with tissues or your sleeve.*

Canadians who choose to wear a non-medical grade mask need to understand their limitations and how to safely use them. Information on the limitations can be found on the Public Health Agency of Canada website: [Considerations in the use of homemade masks to protect against COVID-19](#). Information on how to make a non-medical grade mask and how to properly put on or remove a non-medical grade mask can be found here: [About non-medical masks and face coverings](#).