

The use of face masks in public may reduce the spread of infection in the community by minimising the release of respiratory droplets from infected people.



A **medical face mask** (also known as surgical or procedure mask) creates a barrier between hospital staff and patients by covering the mouth, nose and chin. It is used by healthcare workers to prevent large respiratory droplets and splashes from reaching the mouth and nose of the wearer. It also reduces and/or controls the spread of large respiratory droplets from the person wearing it.



Non-medical face masks (or 'community' masks) include various forms of self-made or commercial masks and face covers made of cloth, other textiles or other materials (e.g. paper). They are not standardised and not intended for use in healthcare settings or by healthcare professionals.



A **respirator** or a filtering face piece is designed to protect the wearer from exposure to airborne contaminants and is classified as personal protective equipment. Filtering face pieces are mainly used by healthcare workers, especially during aerosol-generating procedures. Valved respirators are not appropriate for use as a means of infection control, as they do not prevent the release of respiratory particles from the wearer into the environment.

The use of **medical** face masks by healthcare workers must be given priority over their use in the community.



The use of **face masks** in the community may be considered when visiting busy, closed spaces such as grocery stores, shopping centres, or when using public transport etc.

Face masks should only be considered as a **complementary** measure and not a replacement for established preventive practices, such as physical distancing, cough and sneeze etiquette, hand hygiene and avoiding face touching.



Remember! Proper use of face masks is key for their effectiveness and safety.



Make sure the face mask completely covers your face from the bridge of your nose down to your chin.



If your face mask is disposable, dispose of it in a safe way.



Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser before putting the face mask on or taking it off.



If your mask is reusable, wash it as soon as possible after each use with common detergent at 60 °C.



When taking your face mask off, remove it from behind - be sure not to touch the front of it.



Campaigns showing the appropriate use of face masks by the public may improve their effective and safe use.