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Guidelines

Guidelines for Wearing a Face Mask (with a mandatory section)

Objective

To provide guidelines to the public for wearing a face mask during the current epidemic of COVID-19.

Rationale

A regular disposable face mask (also called a surgical face mask or a medical face mask) is considered as one of the 'Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)' of a health care worker. It is also used in the healthcare settings to cover the face of a patient, from whom spread of a communicable infection is a possibility.

As regards COVID-19, there is now evidence to believe that a person infected with COVID-19 virus may appear well for a variable period before falling ill or may never exhibit any symptoms yet is shedding virus during sneezing, coughing and while speaking. As it is not possible for someone to know with certitude if he or she is carrying COVID-19 virus and releasing these in the atmosphere, it is prudent, under the circumstances of the current pandemic, for the people to wear face masks with an intention to protect their fellow beings from droplets of their saliva/sputum particularly when entering closed or congested areas and also to protect themselves. Many countries have adopted this as a national guideline.

Instructions

- It is pertinent to remember that use of ordinary face mask is not a substitute for adoption of social distancing and at no time distancing be abandoned wherever required in addition to regular handwashing with soap and water.
- In a health care setting, all the health care workers shall follow the guidelines for wearing PPE. Patients shall follow the advice of their doctors.
- All covid-19 positive and suspected individuals must wear disposable facemasks to ensure that others around them are protected from droplets generated by the positive person while breathing, talking, coughing or sneezing.
- All individuals should wear a disposable face mask or any other available face mask (cloth mask as indicated in Annex) on leaving their home with the intention of protecting others with whom they may come in close contact and also for their own protection.
- **Facemasks are mandatory to be worn by everyone in following situations:**



- **Crowded Public Places, Mosque, Bazaars, Shopping Malls, Public transport including road, rails and flights**
- Once the mask is worn, it is part of the face and it must not be touched with hands throughout its use. If touched or handled after wearing, then hands must be washed with soap & water or sanitized with an alcohol-based hand rub according to the guidelines of hand hygiene
- The mask should be replaced with a new one when it gets soiled or becomes moist.
- The soiled disposable mask shall be disposed off properly and the reusable one shall be placed in a sealable polythene bag and placed in a dedicated pocket of the dress or in a dedicated pocket of a washable handbag.
- The pocket of the dress or the bag, in which a soiled mask was saved, shall not be used or handled for any other purpose before washing.
- N95 mask is only needed in high risk healthcare facilities by the health workers and is beneficial only when worn with special precautions and appropriate procedures.

Note: The above recommendations are being regularly reviewed by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination and will be updated based on the international & national recommendations and best practices.

The Ministry acknowledges the contribution of Irfan Mira, Dr. Saira Kanwal and HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH team to compile these guidelines.

References:

1. Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19, CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
2. Rational use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) by WHO
3. Interim recommendations for the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) during hospital care of people with Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

For more information, please contact:

HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH, PM National Health Complex, Islamabad

<http://covid.gov.pk/>

<http://nhsrcofficial.gov.pk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NHSRCOfficial>

<http://www.hsa.edu.pk/>

<https://twitter.com/nhsrcofficial>

<https://www.nih.org.pk/>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdYuzeSP4Ug1f_ZZKI

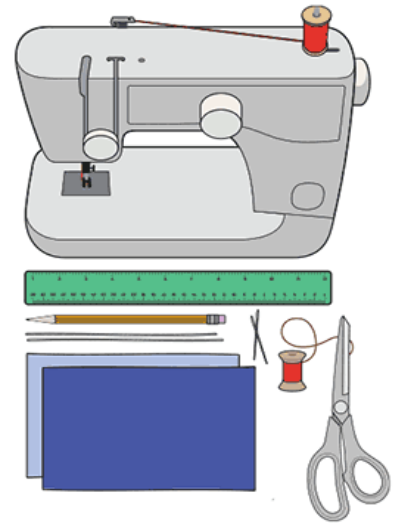
ANNEXURE: MAKING OF CLOTH FACE MASKS (CDC)

SEWN CLOTH FACE COVERING

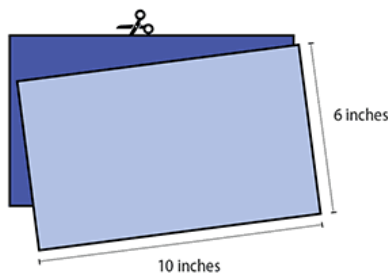
Materials

- Two 10"x6" rectangles of cotton fabric
- Two 6" pieces of elastic (or rubber bands, string, cloth strips, or hair ties)
- Needle and thread (or bobby pin)
- Scissors
- Sewing machine

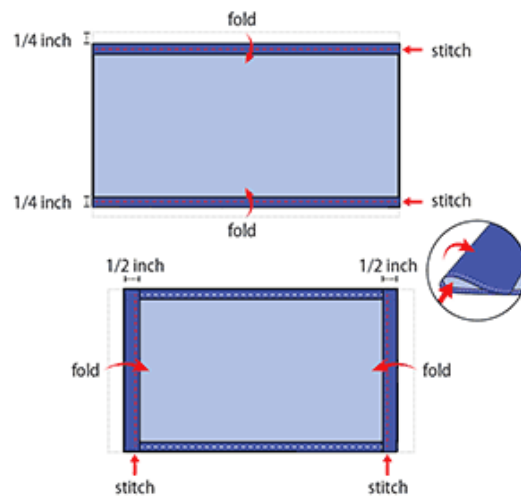
Tutorial



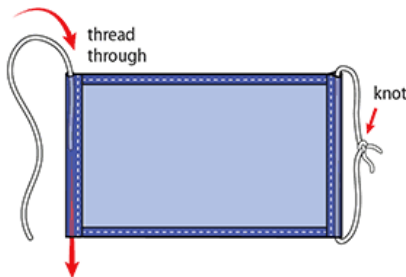
1. Cut out two 10-by-6-inch rectangles of cotton fabric. Use tightly woven cotton, such as quilting fabric or cotton sheets. T-shirt fabric will work in a pinch. Stack the two rectangles; you will sew the mask as if it was a single piece of fabric.



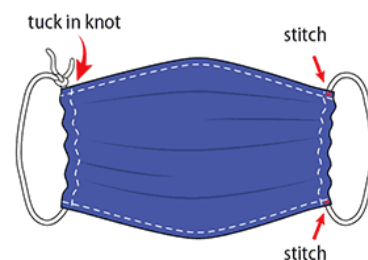
2. Fold over the long sides $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and hem. Then fold the double layer of fabric over $\frac{1}{2}$ inch along the short sides and stitch down.



3. Run a 6-inch length of $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch wide elastic through the wider hem on each side of the mask. These will be the ear loops. Use a large needle or a bobby pin to thread it through. Tie the ends tight.



4. Gently pull on the elastic so that the knots are tucked inside the hem. Gather the sides of the mask on the elastic and adjust so the mask fits your face. Then securely stitch the elastic in place to keep it from slipping.

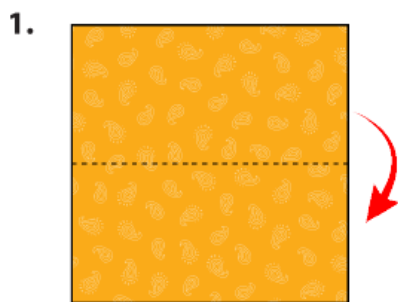


BANDANA FACE COVERING (NO SEW METHOD)

Materials

- Bandana (or square cotton cloth approximately 20"x20")
- Rubber bands (or hair ties)
- Scissors (if you are cutting your own cloth)

Tutorial



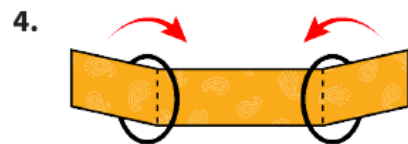
Fold bandana in half.



Fold top down. Fold bottom up.



Place rubber bands or hair ties about 6 inches apart.



Fold side to the middle and tuck.

