

## USE OF WASHABLE/REUSABLE MASKS FOR PREVENTION

***FIRST: If a person being supported is unwell then disposable masks and full precautions are to be used, NOT reusable masks. Refer to existing guidelines.***

***SECOND: Using a face mask does not replace the need to continue with other Universal Precautions such as proper handwashing, cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting, and proper cough/sneeze etiquette.***

**Hand washing remains the primary preventative measure and a reusable/washable mask is NOT to replace this evidence-based practice.**

### **How to put on a Face Mask:**

- Clean your hands with soap and water (or hand sanitizer) before touching the mask.
- Remove a mask from its packaging and make sure there are no obvious tears or holes in either side of the mask.
- Determine which side of the mask is the front. Remember to always wear your facemask in the same orientation – i.e. you should always have the same side facing outwards (the “contaminated” side).
- **Face Mask with Ear Loops:**
  - Hold the mask by the ear loops.
  - Place a loop around each ear.
- **Face Mask with Ties:**
  - Bring the mask to your nose level and place the ties over the crown of your head and secure with a bow.
  - Then take the bottom ties, one in each hand, and secure with a bow at the nape of your neck.
- **Face Mask with Elastic Bands:**
  - Hold the mask in your hand with the nosepiece or top of the mask at fingertips, allowing the headbands to hang freely below hands.
  - Bring the mask to your nose level and pull the top strap over your head so that it rests over the crown of your head. Pull the bottom strap over your head so that it rests at the nape of your neck.
- Mold the top of your mask to the shape of your nose.
- Pull the bottom of the mask over your mouth and chin.
- It is critical that the mask covers nose, mouth and chin.

**continued on other side →**

*Should a mask that is being worn become wet or moist such that the moisture could penetrate multiple layers of material, then the mask must be removed and replaced.*

*When it is determined that masks need to be worn, disposable masks must be removed and disposed appropriately, and reusable masks must be removed and washed daily.*

### **How to remove a face mask:**

- Clean your hands with soap and water (or hand sanitizer) before touching the mask.
- Avoid touching the front of the mask. The front of the mask is contaminated.
- Only touch the ear loops/ties/band.
- **Face Mask with Ear Loops:**
  - Hold both of the ear loops and gently lift and remove the mask.
- **Face Mask with Ties:**
  - Untie the bottom bow first then untie the top bow and pull the mask away from you as the ties are loosened, holding the mask by the ties.
- **Face Mask with Elastic Bands:**
  - Lift the bottom strap over your head first, then pull the top strap over your head, ensuring that the front of the mask does not flip and contact your face.
- Again, Clean your hands with soap and water (or hand sanitizer).

*If the contaminated side of the mask makes contact with your hands or face, you should continue to remove the mask and then immediately wash your hands and face with soap and water.*

Washable/reusable masks are to be put directly into the laundry bin for cleaning and then cannot be used again until they are machine-washed. All used reusable masks must be washed daily.

Disposable masks can only be worn once and must be immediately thrown into the trash after each use.