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STATE OF ISRAEL
MINISTRY OF HEALTH
Information and International Relations

אגף הסברה ויחסים בינלאומיים

משרד הבריאות
לחיים בריאים יותר

Wearing a mask that covers your mouth and nose in public in order to minimize the chance of infection

The COVID-19 novel coronavirus is transferred between people on droplets while speaking, coughing, or sneezing. Most people who are infected with the coronavirus are asymptomatic and will feel totally fine, but they are infected, and therefore **they can transmit the virus to others.**

Masks covering the mouth and nose greatly reduce the chance of getting infected and infecting others. These masks prevent the emission of droplets that carry the disease from reaching the nose and mouth. The masks protect those who wear it, as well as others around them, therefore, when a carrier of the virus meets a non-carrier, if both are wearing a mask, the protection against infection is doubled.

Therefore, we are instructing everyone to wear a mask at all times in public to prevent exposing acquaintances, bystanders, and coworkers.

In public, such as supermarkets, one must wear a mask in order to prevent emission of droplets that may be harmful to others.

At home – amongst household members there is no need to wear a mask

At work – in a single-person room there is no need to wear a mask

Each mask with a high filtration capacity protects the wearer and their environment.

Types of masks suitable for the general population include:

1. **Surgeon's masks** – the standard required by hospitals and clinics and are also suitable for the general population

2. **Non-medical oral-nasal masks –** provides protection, but the degree of protection depends on the mask

3. **Multi-layered cloth masks** – can provide very good protection, depending on the type of fabric, its thickness, and the number of layers

The N95 masks protects from transmission as well, but is not required, except when treating severely ill patients in hospitals undergoing respiratory procedures.

Masks with valves – not suitable in the community because the valve emits air with pressure that can cause spraying of droplets and therefor transmission.

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It is possible to keep a medical or commercial mask for reuse. Keep the mask clean and well ventilated, away from accidental hand contact, and place it on clean, absorbent paper. Worn out, dirty, or torn masks should be discarded.

Homemade masks

In the absence of a medical or commercial mask, it is possible to make an oral-nasal improvised mask or make a multi-folded fabric mask with excellent filtering capacity. The mask should be made from two or three layers according to the thickness and quality of the fabric.

To make a fabric mask, it is recommended to choose woven (non-stretch) cotton fabric as tightly woven as possible (density over 200 threads per inch such as a satin or percale fabric) and fold it into 3 layers (or 500 threads per inch at 2 folds). The fabric should be suitable for washing at 70 degrees Celsius so that it may be reused.

The mask must cover the mouth and nose (possible dimensions are a rectangular mask of 14X18 cm). The mask must be sewn on all sides. Rubber bands can be used instead of laces to tighten the mask behind the ears or on the neck.

It is preferable to make several masks for each person, so that they can be changed whenever the mask is wet, dirty, or overused. The used mask should be kept in a clean plastic bag. The makeshift masks should be washed at a temperature of over 70 degrees Celsius for 30 minutes or more, and may be dried in the sun or a dryer.

Remember

A worn-out mask does not protect. A loose, wet, wrinkled, or torn mask that does not attach well to the face does not provide protection. Replace masks as needed.

Ensure that the mask does not cause difficulty breathing. If so, do not use the mask. Caution should be exercised in patients with pre-existing heart and lung diseases. Masks that make breathing difficult can make the disease worse. Consult your doctor if you feel it is necessary.

One must disinfect hands with alcohol or soap and water after touching the mask to prevent the virus from being transmitted from the outside of the mask to the nose and mouth.

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