York University Mask Information Sheet

November 2022
Mask Information Sheet

IMPORTANT: Disposable masks, including surgical, procedural, and N95/KN95 masks are typically single use, but may be reused until visibly dirty, damp or damaged. Please follow the manufacturer’s instructions for use and disposal. Non-medical masks, including cloth masks, are not a replacement for required personal protective equipment (PPE).

Wearing a well-fitted mask is one of many measures to protect ourselves and others. As per the Public Health Agency of Canada, while non-medical masks can help prevent COVID-19 spread, medical masks and respirators provide better protection. For more information about different types of masks, see Public Health Agency of Canada’s COVID-19 mask use: Types of masks and respirators poster.

Non-medical masks (e.g. cloth masks) are not classified as personal protective equipment (PPE). If a respirator (e.g., N95) is required for a specific job hazard, they are considered to be PPE and, as such, fit testing and other Respirator Program requirements should be followed.

Wearing a mask, in addition to getting vaccinated, physical distancing where possible or reasonable, and other public health measures, can reduce the spread of COVID-19. Please continue to follow applicable public health measures and York COVID-19 protocols, such as not coming to campus if feeling unwell, and properly washing your hands often.

Wearing a mask is a way of covering your mouth, nose and chin to prevent your respiratory droplets or aerosols from contaminating others or landing on surfaces. A mask can protect you and any others by containing respiratory droplets or aerosols that can spread the virus.

Masks may still be required in certain situations, as per public health requirements. Please continue to review applicable public health guidance for the most current information regarding masking.

Check your mask to ensure it is in good condition prior to use:

- Inspect it for fraying and holes – there should not be any of these.
- Ensure it is clean and dry.

Do not wear any mask that is frayed, has holes, is wet or dirty.
How to make your mask fit properly:

- Properly wash or sanitize your hands immediately before putting the mask on, and practice good hand hygiene while wearing it.
- Make sure your mask completely covers your mouth, nose and chin.
- Check for gaps between the mask and your face and adjust to improve fit and ensure there are no gaps.

Ways to improve fit:

- Tie knots in ear loops.
- Tuck in sides of mask so that it lies flat against your face.
- Use a mask fitter or brace to help improve fit.
- Layer a well-fitting non-medical cloth mask over a disposable mask to help push the edges of the disposable mask closer to your face.

Note: The mask should not impair vision or breathing, or interfere with tasks.

- **Reusable cloth masks:** Often, the inner part of the cloth mask can be distinguished by the observable stitching close to the elastic bands and is a different colour from the outer part. It should fit well (non-gaping).
**How to safely remove (or “doff”) a disposable or reusable mask:**

- Wash or sanitize your hands, be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and/or mouth when removing your mask.
- Gently remove by the elastic loops in a downward direction. Wash or sanitize your hands properly right after taking it off.

**Care for your mask:**

- Change your mask as soon as it gets damp or soiled.
- To wash **reusable** cloth masks, put them directly into the washing machine or into a disposable bag that can be emptied into the washing machine.
- **Reusable** cloth masks may be laundered with other items using a hot cycle, and then dried thoroughly.
- Discard **disposable** masks that cannot be washed, in a plastic-lined garbage bin after use. Kindly do not dispose of used masks in the blue recycle bins.

**Warnings:**

A mask should not be placed on or used by:

- Children under two years of age;
- Persons with an underlying medical condition which inhibits their ability to wear a mask or face covering;
- Persons who are unable to place or remove a mask without assistance; and
- Persons who require accommodation in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code that precludes the wearing of a mask.

**References:**

- [Public Health Ontario Optimizing Masks against COVID-19](#)
- [Public Health Ontario: COVID-19: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Non-Medical Masks in Congregate Living Settings](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada: COVID-19 mask use: Advice for community settings](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada: COVID-19 mask use: Types of masks and respirators](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada: COVID-19 mask use: How to make your mask fit properly](#)