

## **Masks, Face Shields and Exemptions**

### **What kind of mask should I wear in public settings when I cannot stay two-metres (six-feet) from others?**

Wear a non-medical mask composed of disposable paper or cloth. Medical masks, such as N95, are not necessary for the public and should be reserved for health-care workers. Masks should have two or more layers that cover your nose and mouth. Masks should fit snugly against the sides of your face and under your chin.

### **What kind of material should my face mask be made of?**

Masks should be made of two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric such as cotton. You should avoid masks that are made of fabric that make it hard to breathe, for example vinyl. Disposable masks may also be used and should be put in the garbage when soiled.

### **What is the proper way to wear a mask?**

Masks should cover your nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of your face and under your chin.

Do not wear your mask around your neck, on your forehead, under your nose, on your chin, dangling from one ear or on your arm. A small plastic bag is a safe place to store your mask when not wearing it.

### **Can I wear a mask that has a vent or valves?**

No. Vents or valves in masks allow virus particles to escape and are not recommended during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Are there any tips for those who wear glasses and find it hard to wear a mask?**

Masks that fit closely over your nose or one that has a nose wire tend to limit fogging. Several styles may need to be tried to find the best fit. In addition, lens treatments are available to limit fogging.

### **Is it okay to wear a face shield or mouth shield instead of a face mask?**

No. Face and mouth shields are not as effective at preventing the transmission of viruses because they do not effectively contain the spray of respiratory droplets like saliva and mucus.

### **When are face shields appropriate to be used?**

A face shield is intended to be used with a mask and is mainly used for eye protection for the person wearing it. Health-care workers wear face shields, along with masks, and other protective equipment, to protect both themselves and patients from becoming infected with COVID-19.

More information is available [here](#).

**Is it okay to wear a face gaiter/scarf/bandana instead of a mask?**

No. Face gaiters, scarves and bandanas can not be worn instead of a face mask to protect against COVID-19. They are not as effective at preventing the transmission of viruses because they do not effectively contain the spray of respiratory droplets like saliva and mucus.

**Can people with asthma, lung disease or other respiratory conditions wear a face mask?**

Yes. Individuals with asthma or other respiratory conditions can wear a face mask. The Canadian Lung Association, the Canadian Thoracic Society, and Asthma Canada all support public health recommendations on mask use as protection against COVID-19.

**What are my options if I have difficulty or feel that I am unable to wear a mask?**

If a person has challenges wearing a mask, it is recommended that they try different styles until they find the one most comfortable for them. Masks can loop behind the ears or tie behind the head and are available in various shapes including pleated and form fitting. Masks can be made of different fabric such as cotton or disposable paper. Devices such as headbands and hats with buttons, or clips to hook elastics on are also available to take pressure off the ears.

For mild anxiety or claustrophobia, individuals can consult with their health-care providers for coping techniques.

**Who is exempt from wearing a face mask?**

Some people are not able to wear masks for various reasons. It's important to remember that these reasons may not always be visible to others. New Brunswickers should always treat each other with kindness, respect and understanding.

Some examples of people not required to wear a mask are below:

- Children under the age of two;
- People who, due to cognitive impairment, an intellectual disability, a neurodevelopment disorder or a severe mental health problem, are unable to adhere to the requirement;
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance;
- Situations that include a person who is deaf or hard of hearing who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate;
- People who are receiving medical treatment or receiving a service, that requires it to be removed. In these cases, they may remove their mask or face covering for the duration of the treatment or service only.
- As per WorkSafeNB's occupational health and safety Acts and Regulations, people who work or practice their profession in a place accessible to the public if it is closed or partially covered with a physical barrier are exempt from wearing masks. Persons for whom wearing a face mask would create a risk to that person's health and safety related to their

## Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

work, would also be exempted as determined through occupational health and safety guidelines.

It is even more important that people exempted from wearing a mask practice physical distancing of staying two metres away from others, wash or sanitize hands frequently and get tested if unwell, even with mild symptoms. It is also recommended that people exempted from wearing a mask or face covering avoid, as much as possible, crowded places where masks are mandatory and plan to do errands during off-peak times when stores are less crowded, or have items delivered if possible.

### Resources:

- Use of a Community Mask to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19:  
<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/MASK.pdf>
- Tips for wearing a Face mask with Asthma:  
<https://asthma.ca/asthma-and-covid-19-coronavirus/>
- Canadian Lung Association:  
<https://www.lung.ca/lung-health/lung-disease/covid-19-coronavirus/faqs>
- Canadian Thoracic Society:  
<https://cts-sct.ca/covid-19/use-of-face-masks-by-the-public/>
- How to Combat Mask Anxiety:  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/erasing-stigma/202006/how-combat-mask-anxiety>