



FACE MASK GUIDANCE

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks. These droplets are too heavy to hang in the air. They quickly fall on floors or surfaces. You can be infected by breathing in the virus if you are within 1 metre of a person who has COVID-19, or by touching a contaminated surface and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands. (World Health Organisation *WHO*)

Based on WHO guidelines there is no evidence to suggest that COVID 19 Coronavirus is spread by airborne particles. The use of face masks themselves will not be effective in protecting you from COVID 19, they should only be used in conjunction with other control measures such as hand washing and only when necessary.

As information and guidelines are regularly being updated, we have produced this document to help clarify the use of face masks and more importantly the type of face mask that should be used in specific COVID 19 situations to ensure they are effective.

There are two main types of masks available and each has a specific use

1. **Surgical masks** work in the direction of exhalation (from inside to outside).
This is the type of mask that should be worn by someone with symptoms of COVID 19. It is important to wear the surgical mask as soon as infection is suspected, or a cough develops.
They should meet the EN 14683 standard
 - Surgical masks prevent droplets of saliva or secretions from the upper respiratory tract when the wearer exhales
 - Surgical masks prevent the wearer from contaminating his or her surroundings and environment
 - Surgical masks are only available as disposable
2. **Respirator Masks** work in the direction of inspiration (from outside to inside).
This is the type of mask that should be worn by a caregiver or someone who cannot maintain a distance of more than 1m from a suspected or known case of COVID 19. In Europe they should meet the EN 149 standard, they come in three classes of filtration, FFP 1,2 & 3, with FFP 2 or above being recommended for Coronavirus. Equivalent US standards are N95
 - Respirator masks protect the wearer from inhaling droplets of infectious agents i.e. against contamination by a virus such as COVID 19 coronavirus
 - Respirator masks should be personal and can be disposable or reusable, it is possible to replace the filter. The duration of a mask's effectiveness varies according to use, this is indicated by the manufacturer instructions

Masks are scarce and not always being used correctly, they offer a level of comfort to many but please only use a mask where you have considered the information above and cannot reduce the risk of possible infection in any other way, it's important that there is always masks available when needed.

1. For healthy people wear a mask only if you are taking care of a person with suspected COVID 19 (**Respirator Mask**)
2. If you are coughing or sneezing (**Surgical Mask**)
3. If you cannot maintain a distance of more than 1m with someone who you feel is a risk (**Respirator Mask**)
4. It is important to know how to use and dispose of masks correctly

CLIENT AND SITE REQUIREMENTS MAY DIFFER FROM THE ABOVE AND SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED