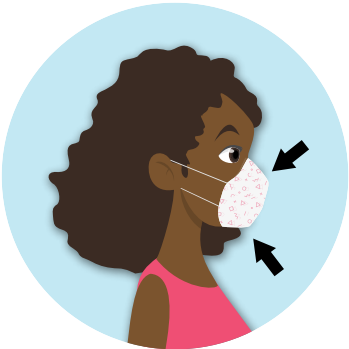# COVID-19 mask use:
How to make your mask fit properly

When layered with other recommended public health measures, a well-constructed, well-fitting and properly worn mask can help prevent you and others from being exposed to COVID-19. No matter which type of mask you are using, proper fit is a key factor in its effectiveness.

How to make your mask fit properly

Make sure your mask completely covers your nose, mouth and chin.

Check for gaps between your face and your mask.
- Check the top, sides and bottom of your mask.
- Check the edges of your mask for air leaks and adjust if necessary.

Improve mask fit so it's snug and has no gaps.
- Adjust the ties, bands or ear loops.
- Adjust the nosepiece.

Other ways to improve mask fit include:

Tie knots in the ear loops.

Tuck in the sides of the mask so that it lies flat against your face.

Use a mask fitter or brace to help provide a snug 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.
- Make sure that you can still breathe easily when wearing 2 masks.

Consider keeping facial hair shaved or short if possible, as this allows the masks to fit more closely to your face.

General principles for mask fit

A well-fitting mask should:
- be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose, mouth and chin without gaps
- not allow air to escape from edges
- fit securely to the head with ties, bands or ear loops
- be comfortable and not require frequent adjustments
- maintain its shape after washing and drying (for reusable non-medical masks only)

Choosing a mask that fits properly

When choosing a mask, the fit is important. Keep in mind:
- the fit of the mask can vary depending on the size and features of your face
- masks with a flexible nosepiece may provide a better fit over the nose
- masks with ties or bands that go around the back of the head may provide a better fit
- if choosing an ear loop-style mask, use one with adjustable ear loops, or use the tips below to improve mask fit
- respirators are designed to fit snugly on the face, which may allow for a better fit than a medical mask
- a respirator worn in the community doesn't need to be formally fit tested

This advice is intended for the general public and is **not** intended for occupational health purposes, including health care settings.

Government of Canada   Gouvernement du Canada

Canada