



**SIKSIKA HEALTH SERVICES**  
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**Guidance on Mask Use in Public Places**

**Who does this guidance apply to?**

1. Visitors and staff of all Siksika owned buildings.
2. Siksika Nation Members while in public places outside of Siksika

As always, the most important steps Siksika Nation members can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is good hand hygiene, staying home (especially when sick), and practicing physical distancing of 2 meters from others. These public health measures should continue to be maintained at all times and in all settings. This guidance is in addition to these measures. Questions regarding this guidance should be directed to [cdc@siksikahealth.com](mailto:cdc@siksikahealth.com)

**Mandatory mask use in all Siksika Nation owned buildings**

As of August 1, 2020, all visitors and staff are required to wear masks (medical grade or non-medical grade) while in Siksika Nation owned buildings. Recommended exceptions include:

- when eating, provided physical distancing, hand hygiene and sanitation of surfaces is maintained.
- when alone in an office or workspace that is NOT shared, and where physical distancing, hand hygiene and sanitization of surfaces is maintained.
- Young children under two years of age.
- People with underlying medical conditions or disabilities inhibiting their ability to wear a face covering.
- People who are unable to place, use, or remove a face covering safely without assistance.
- People engaging in an athletic or fitness activity.
- In circumstances where a mask detrimentally interferes with an activity or service (for example, lip reading or dentist visit).

**Why is guidance on masking changing?**

Community spread of COVID-19 is increasing in Alberta, and there is emerging evidence that individuals infected with COVID-19 can transmit infection while they have no symptoms, before they develop symptoms, and while they have minimal symptoms.

**What is the purpose of this guidance?**

To protect people from inadvertent exposure from another person who does not know they are infected with COVID-19 and limit potential spread in situations and community settings where physical distancing is not possible or is unpredictable.

**What is NOT changing?**

This guidance does not change the requirement to self-isolate when sick. Anyone with new symptoms compatible with COVID19 infection are required to self-isolate and should contact Siksika CDC team by phone at 403-734-5720 or by e-mail at [cdc@siksikahealth.com](mailto:cdc@siksikahealth.com).

**General guidance for medical and non-medical mask use**

**How to wear a mask with ear loops or ties:**

- Before putting on the mask, wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Ensure your hair is away from your face. A facemask can be safely worn by someone with facial hair
- Check the mask for damage; if damaged, discard.
- Open mask fully to cover from nose to below the chin.

- Place over nose and mouth and secure to your head with ties or ears with ear loops (depending on the style of mask).
- If the mask has a nose bar, pinch around your nose to reduce gaps between your face and the mask.
- Adjust if needed to make sure your nose and mouth are fully covered.

#### **How to remove a mask with ear loops or ties:**

- Remove your mask if it becomes wet, torn, dirty or the ear loops/ties become damaged.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol before you remove the mask.
- Do not touch the front of the mask. Remove using the ties or ear loops.
- If mask is single use dispose in a lined garbage bin.
- If mask is reusable, place in clean plastic bag, and bring home to be cleaned.
- After removing your mask wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or alcohol-based hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol.

#### **What not to do with your mask:**

- Do not touch your face under the mask.
- Do not use a ripped, visibly soiled or wet mask or if the ear loops/ties are damaged.
- Don't wear the same mask for a long period of time; it must be changed when it gets damp.
- Don't share masks with another person
- Don't wear the mask below your nose or chin.
- Don't let the mask give you a false sense of security; masks are meant to be used to as an addition to other measures such as physical distancing wherever possible, and hand washing.

#### **How to take care of your mask:**

- Always store, use, re-use and/or discard your mask in accordance with the directions of the manufacturer, if they are available
- Store your masks in a way that protects them from getting dirty or damaged (for example in a sealed and clean storage bag)
- Place in a dry area in your home
- Identify or label mask storage bags so masks are not used by others, accidentally

#### **Laundering your mask:**

- Place the cloth mask directly into the washing machine or a bag that can be emptied into the washing machine. Throw out the bag after you have used it to store used masks.
- Launder with other items using a hot cycle, and ensure cloth masks are dried thoroughly.
- Inspect the mask prior to reuse to ensure it has maintained its shape after washing and drying.
- Perform hand hygiene immediately after handling a used mask.

#### **What to consider before making or buying a cloth mask:**

- Use multiple layers of tight woven fabric - 4 layers is optimal.
- Use a combination of fabrics such as a high thread count cotton (e.g. 600-thread count pillowcases and cotton sheets) with spunbond polypropylene or polyester.
- If possible, use different fabrics or colours for each side of the mask. This helps you to know which side faces your mouth and which side faces out.
- Choose a fabric or cloth that can withstand frequent cycles through washing and drying machines.