

Dos & Don'ts *for wearing* Surgical Masks

What they are and when to use them

SURGICAL MASK: A disposable mask that protects the wearer from airborne droplets and body substance splashes. It also filters expired air of the wearer, which can interrupt transmission of infectious conditions e.g. TB, Flu. They are also used in the operating suite and other procedures to prevent contamination of surgical wounds and critical sites, e.g. CVC and epidural insertion, lumbar puncture, with oropharyngeal organisms. These masks are available with a built-in visor to extend the protection from body substance splash or spray to include eyes.

TYPES OF SURGICAL MASKS



WHEN TO USE:

- Whenever contact with body substance spray is anticipated, e.g. trauma, theatre settings
- When within one metre of a person requiring droplet precautions e.g. flu, pertussis
- When performing an invasive procedure that requires the HCW's breath to be filtered, e.g. operating suite procedures, insertion of central line

DO

- ✓ **DO** clean your hands before putting on and after removing mask
- ✓ **DO** wear your mask to protect you from infectious droplets and body substance spray.
- ✓ **DO** check that there no defects such as holes or torn straps
- ✓ **DO** make sure the mask is completely covering your nose and mouth.
- ✓ **DO** choose a mask with ear loops where available for ease of application and comfort
- ✓ **Do** tie one strap at the crown of the head and the other at the nape of the neck when using a mask with ties
- ✓ **DO** remove mask using straps in an out and downwards movement and dispose of immediately
- ✓ **DO** give to patients who have an airborne or droplet spread infection when they are not in a single room.

DON'T

- ✗ **DON'T** wear for infections that require airborne precautions e.g. TB, Measles
- ✗ **DON'T** wear if wet or soiled; get a new mask
- ✗ **DON'T** leave a mask hanging off one ear or hanging around the neck.
- ✗ **DON'T** reuse; discard it immediately after removal
- ✗ **DON'T** touch the front of your mask

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