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சுவசிரிபாய
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Ministry of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine

All DDGs
All Directors
PDHS and RDHSs


Health Ministry's stand on wearing masks, gloves and disinfection

Annexed herewith are the guidelines on wearing masks, gloves and disinfection.

Annex 1 - Disinfection of inside and outside of public buildings and open public places

Annex 2- Use of gloves in the community/ in public places

Annex 3- Wearing masks in the community


Director General of Health Services

Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medical Services

Annex 3

Wearing masks in the community

Introduction

Wearing masks in the community is subjected to divided opinions since the beginning of the pandemic of COVID –19 due to many reasons. Limited supplies were a major issue in global scale all PPE including masks.

The main identified mode of transmission of SARS CoV 2 virus is via respiratory droplets by direct or indirect contact. Respiratory droplets are generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Therefore, the members of the public who have signs and symptoms of upper respiratory tract infection should avoid going out and going to the workplace even with these masks. They should stay home until recovery.

Indications to wear masks in the community

1. People with respiratory symptoms

- Members of the community with respiratory symptoms should wear a mask, preferably a 3 ply surgical mask.
- A person, who takes care of a patient with respiratory symptoms at home, should wear a 3 ply surgical mask when they are in the same room.

2. General public

Wearing a mask by the community should be in addition to engaging in other more useful and effective means of prevention such as hand washing, hand sanitizer use, maintaining people distance and not touching face nose mouth or eyes. Mask is not an alternative for not following other measures.

- It is adequate for the public to wear commercially available mask /homemade cloth masks (consisting of 2-3 layers of non-allergenic, woven material). This is to protect them, when they cannot maintain other means of distancing methods or when the distancing is not practical.
- These masks should snugly fit and be secured with ties or ear loops and should allow breathing without restriction. The homemade masks should easily be washable and dried without damaging the shape with shrinking/ being elastic.
- Members of the community, should understand that they do not come in contact with patients like the medical staff, and as such need not wear medical masks (procedure or surgical) and these type of masks should be reserved for health care workers. Further, there is no need for the public to wear N95 masks or similar respirators.
- The cloth mask should be removed when it is soaked or damp. Therefore the person needs to keep extra masks with him/her and keep a separate polythene bag to store the disposed cloth mask.
- Masks should not be used by the public who are having breathing problems, children who are less than 2 years or any other group of individuals who might not tolerate masks.
- Exercising and heavy work engaging while wearing masks is not advisable.

Important aspects of wearing masks

- The masks should not be shared with anybody.
- Practice hand hygiene before donning and after removing the mask.
- The mask should cover the nose & mouth and should cover undersurface of the chin to have good fit,
- The mask should not be worn leaving the nostrils out /just below the nostrils. It should not be worn like a necklace not tying the upper two ties
- Mask should not be touched once worn to avoid contaminating with infectious material.
- The nose should not be scratched over the mask.
- If by some means you leave inside out while wearing (e.g.: for eating by losing the upper ties it is best not to use that mask again.

- If the mask is kept for reuse the inside should be inverted and kept in a separate polythene bag.
- Homemade cloth masks can be reused after washing and ironing.
- The material of the mask should not be sprayed with anything or any concoction applied on to the material (risk of inhalation of fungal spores)