

## Instructions on the use of face masks

On 7 September 2020, the 2-metre physical distancing rule between unrelated individuals was changed to a 1-metre rule. Where the 1-metre rule cannot be enforced, face masks that cover the mouth and nose must be used.

- **In cases where it is possible to ensure a 1-metre distance between persons, face masks need not be worn. The general use of face masks in public is not recommended.**
- **Face masks will never replace basic infection control that must be used at all times: washing hands, general hygiene and the cleaning of contact surfaces.**
- **Face masks do not replace the 1-metre rule in e.g. shops, bars and cafés.**

### Face masks should be used:

- On all international and domestic flights in Iceland.
- On passenger ferries, if the 1-metre distance rule cannot be followed. Note that there is no need for masks if passengers are inside their vehicles, onboard the ferry.
- On other public transport if there are no measures taken to maintain the 1-metre distance between persons. It is especially important to use masks when travelling by coach from the airport after border screening and during longer travel in coaches. In city/local buses, however, where the journey normally lasts for less than 30 minutes, masks are not required. There however vulnerable persons should use a mask.
- At services that require close proximity such as performed by hair salons, massage parlours, physical therapists, dentists, optometrists and visiting nurses the therapist should use a mask and the customer also if possible.
- In all other circumstances, numerical restrictions and the 1-metre physical distancing rule apply and face masks cannot replace these measures.

Children born 2005 and later are not required to wear face masks.

**Appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn when providing health care services.**

### The most stringent hygiene measures must be taken when using face masks:

The purpose of face masks is to capture respiratory droplets from the person wearing the mask to ensure that such droplets are not dispersed into the environment. As a result, used face masks are extremely contaminated with microbes that are commonly found in the mouth. The most stringent hygiene measures, therefore, must be used while wearing masks. Avoid touching the mask and the mask should be changed if damp or damaged in any way. Hands must always be washed or disinfected after touching a used face mask.

Disposable face masks that are disposed of as general waste after use are preferable and hands should be washed or disinfected after touching the mask. Masks should not be used for longer than 4 hours and should then be disposed of.

Reusable masks made of cloth can also be used. Such masks must be made of washable material and must be washed at least daily. The same rules apply to reusable masks as apply to disposable masks. Their exterior becomes contaminated and they should be touched as little as possible and hands must be washed or disinfected after touching them.

### **Keep in mind:**

- The general use of face masks in public is not recommended.
- Damp and contaminated masks are useless and can increase the risk of infection.
- Disposable masks that are used more than once are useless and can increase the risk of infection.
- A mask that does not cover both mouth and nose is useless.
- A mask that is worn on the forehead or under the chin is useless.

[Guidelines:](#) Covid-19 – Establishment of a CEN Workshop. Community face coverings.