Face Coverings: Use & Care

This fact sheet is intended to provide guidance on the use and care of reusable cloth face coverings. Please note that food service workers may have additional requirements for the use of face coverings.

- The CDC recommends cloth face coverings for the general public, to be worn when outside the home in public settings. These are also recommended for use in situations where social distancing practices are difficult to maintain. Examples of this include while traveling to and from work in public spaces, when interacting with customers, when working in proximity to someone, and while performing work tasks.

- **Face coverings do not eliminate the need for physical distancing (6 feet), proper handwashing, and staying home when sick. These coverings are not considered occupational Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).**

- Medical/surgical face masks are in short supply and should be reserved for, and primarily used by, healthcare and Emergency Response workers in healthcare settings. Avoid use of medical/surgical face masks as a face covering; only work tasks with a specific protocol require the use of a medical/surgical mask at Harvard.

- Face coverings should include multiple layers of fabric, allow for breathing without restriction, and be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage.

**Cloth Face Coverings: Use and Care**

- Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water every time you put on and take off the face covering. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Coverings should fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face, placed over the nose and be secured with ties or ear loops.

- Coverings should allow for breathing without restriction; if breathing becomes labored or difficult remove the covering.
• Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing face covering.

• Coverings should be changed out/replaced if they become wet or soiled; *do not* put a used face covering in places where others can touch them or where germs trapped in your face covering can touch other surfaces, such as counter tops. Keep a paper bag with you to store your face covering if you will be taking it off when outside the house.

• Coverings should be laundered with detergent and machine dried.