**Guidelines on use of Face Masks (not N-95) for COVID-19**

A face mask can be used for the purpose of preventing droplet infections from spreading from person to person. It creates a barrier between the person wearing it and the immediate environment and can reduce release of droplets that carry the virus from the nose and mouth. It is most effective in protecting the people around the wearer instead of the person wearing it.  A face mask also protects the wearer’s nose and mouth from splashes or sprays of body fluids. It should be worn only when a distance of at least 6 feet cannot be maintained between the wearer and another person, such as during home visits.

General pointers:

1. Face masks may be re-used as long as they are not wet, contaminated or damaged.
2. Cloth masks should be washed and dried daily. They should also be washed when contaminated.
3. Masks should be replaced if it becomes abnormally hard to breathe through them.
4. Each mask is for personal use only – it should not be used by someone else. Write your name or place an identifying mark on the mask loops or ties so you know it is yours.
5. Store your mask in your own personal sealable container when not in use.
6. A mask should be dry before use.
7. If using gloves, follow this order:
	1. Putting on:
		1. Wash/disinfect hands
		2. Put on mask
		3. Put on gloves
	2. Taking off
		1. Take off gloves
		2. Take off mask
		3. Wash/disinfect hands

How to put on a face mask

1. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask.
2. Remove a mask from the container and make sure there are no obvious tears or holes in either side of the mask.
3. Determine which side of the mask is the top. If the mask has stiff bendable edge, then that is meant to mold to the shape of your nose.
4. Determine which side of the mask is the front. The colored side of the mask is usually the front and should face away from you, while the white side touches your face.
5. Follow the instructions below for the type of mask you are using.
	* *Face Mask with Ear loops:* Hold the mask by the ear loops. Place a loop around each ear.
	* *Face Mask with Ties:* Bring the mask to your nose level and place the ties over the crown of your head and secure with a bow.
6. If there is a stiff edge, mold or pinch the stiff edge to the shape of your nose.
7. If using a face mask with ties: Then take the bottom ties, one in each hand, and secure with a bow at the nape of your neck.
8. Pull the bottom of the mask over your mouth and chin.

How to remove a face mask

1. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask. Avoid touching the front of the mask. Only touch the ear loops/ties/band.
	* *Face Mask with Ear loops:* Hold both of the ear loops and gently lift and remove the mask.
	* *Face Mask with Ties:* Untie the bottom bow first then untie the top bow and pull the mask away from you as the ties are loosened.
2. Store the mask in your container (only 1 mask per bag).
3. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.