



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

## Ministry of Health

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

Ground Floor Park Plaza, St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain

M E D I A R E L E A S E

April 5, 2020

### Ministry of Health Recommends the Use of Face Masks to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

**Port-of-Spain, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020:** Based on ongoing local and international research into the spread and treatment of COVID-19, the Ministry of the Health continuously updates its public health protocols as new scientific evidence emerges.

One significant recent development has been the recommendation from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) supporting “wearing cloth face coverings in public settings”.

In this regard, the Ministry of Health advises the general population that, once they are out in public, **cloth masks (including homemade masks) should be used** as a part of the full range of personal protection measures that should be adopted to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

It should be noted that **cloth masks** are recommended for use by the public. **As previously stated, surgical masks and N95 masks should be left for use by health care workers.**

The Chief Medical Officer, Dr Roshan Parasram, advised the public of this development during the Ministry of Health’s virtual media conference on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2020.

The public is therefore advised of the following guidelines for the use of masks:

- Persons should wear masks once they go out in public
- **Persons must also follow all the other personal protection guidelines:**
  - Stay at home
  - Wash your hands properly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
  - Cover your coughs
  - Avoid touching your face
  - Avoid close contact with people who are ill
  - Sanitize surfaces that are touched often
  - Practice social distancing.

**The use of a mask alone will not reduce the risk of getting COVID-19.**



1 (868) 627-1047 / 623-8492 or  
627-0010/12/14  
Ext. 1720-1725



1 (868) 627-1047



[www.health.gov.tt](http://www.health.gov.tt)



[corporatecommunications@health.gov.tt](mailto:corporatecommunications@health.gov.tt)

- Cloth masks (including homemade masks) are recommended for use by the public. Surgical masks and N95 masks are reserved for use by healthcare workers
- The wearing of masks is highly recommended in areas of high foot traffic (e.g. supermarkets, pharmacies, hardware stores, banks)
- Persons must follow the recommended procedures for the use of masks, including sanitizing hands before putting on and after removing masks. Cloth masks should also be washed and dried thoroughly before re-use.

#### When to wear masks at home

The public is also advised that the consistent use of masks at home is recommended for every member of the household in the following instances,:

- If a family member believes that they have been exposed to COVID-19
- If someone in the home has COVID-19 symptoms.

The Ministry of Health will continue to update the public on all new recommendations regarding the appropriate public health measures to combat the spread of COVID-19.

###