Wearing Masks

Wearing masks properly offers satisfactory protection against respiratory tract infections. People with symptoms of respiratory tract infection and those who have close contact with confirmed cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome should wear a mask to reduce the chance of spread of infection. Their carers and those visiting sick people in hospitals should also wear a mask. The general public may wear a mask for self-protection.

Points to note :

1. Wash hands before wearing a mask.

2. Follow the instructions on the package carefully, if available.

3. In general, when wearing a surgical mask, the following should be noted :

   - The coloured side of the mask faces outwards, with the metallic strip uppermost;
   - The strings or elastic bands are positioned properly to keep the mask firmly in place;
   - The metallic strip moulds to the bridge of the nose;
   - The mask covers the nose, mouth and chin;
   - The mask should fit snugly over the face.

4. Try not to touch the mask once it is secured on your face. If you must do so, wash your hands before and after touching the mask;

5. When taking off the mask, avoid touching the outside of the mask as this part may be covered with germs;

6. After taking off the mask, put the mask into a plastic or paper bag before putting it into a rubbish bin with a lid;

7. A surgical mask should be discarded after use and under no circumstances should it be used for longer than a day. Replace the mask immediately if it is damaged or soiled.

Wearing a mask is just one of the ways to prevent respiratory tract infections. The most important thing a person should do is to observe good personal hygiene practice and healthy lifestyle. For example, wash hands frequently with liquid soap, especially after sneezing, coughing or cleaning the nose.