

Logistique 101 des masques à l'école

Catherine Handfield (Lapresse, August 18, 2020) published a very informative text about face covering at school, she is reporting information from public health specialist. Traduction libre

How many masks will your child need?

Ideally, the child should leave in the morning with at least two clean masks. The child changes it if it has been worn for a long time, if it was handled a lot, if it is dirty, if it's fallen to the ground or if it's wet.

"If it is used for a very short period of time, just to get into school, to go to the classroom, I think it's reasonable to be able to reuse it during the day, unless it is clearly soiled. or wet, says *Dre Chantal Sauvageau, médecin-conseil à l'Institut national de santé publique du Québec*. For the return by bus in the afternoon, it is preferable that the young people do not wear the same mask as in the morning, she adds.

As for the total number of masks to get per child, it depends on the frequency of laundry at home. "We must wash the face covering (s) used every day," writes Marie-Claude Lacasse, of the media relations team at the Ministry of Health and Social Services. It is therefore recommended that you obtain a sufficient number, depending on household laundry habits. »Masks can be washed with other clothing.

How to transport them?

Children can leave the house with two Ziploc-type bags or two washable pouches: one labeled "clean masks", the other labeled "dirty masks".

"Once it has been used, ideally, the face cover should not return to the pouch of the clean bags," specifies medical consultant Chantal Sauvageau. The second bag can therefore be used to store the mask between uses and to bring the used masks home in the evening.

"We will try to avoid putting the mask directly in the pocket", specifies Dr. Sauvageau, who emphasizes that we often carry our hands in our pockets and that the bottom of a pocket is not always very clean. The "dirty mask" pouch or bag should also be cleaned daily.

How to handle them?

It is to be expected: children will have to handle their masks several times during the day. They do not have to put it in class, but will have to wear it on school transport and in common areas of the school. It is compulsory from the fifth grade and recommended for the youngest.

"The handling instructions for children are the same as for adults: wash your hands before putting it on; put it on using the elastics or strings; avoid touching the mask when wearing it, "recommends Marie-Claude Lacasse from the Ministry. When you remove the mask and put it in the bag provided for this purpose, what is recommended is to fold it up to hide the outer portion, where the microbes of others may have come to stick", explains Dr. Chantal Sauvageau.

Another important aspect: children should not turn the mask over to the other side during the day. To differentiate the inner and outer portion, we can identify them and take masks with two colors or two types of patterns, suggests the medical adviser.

How to manage hand washing?

According to public health guidelines, people should wash their hands before putting on a face covering, after putting it on, and whenever handling it. How to deal with all this in the classroom?

“Well, it can get a bit complicated,” agrees Dr. Chantal Sauvageau. Once we are seated at our desks, we are not going to get up and go to the sink and all stick together. This is why ideally children should have their little gel. “As it is not always possible to wash your hands, it is all the more important for parents to show their children how to handle the mask by strings or elastics, adds Marie-Claude Lacasse, of the Ministry.

Which masks to choose?

“The most important thing is to choose a face cover adapted to the size of the child - which covers the nose and mouth, without being too big,” says Marie-Claude Lacasse of the Ministry. The mask, she continues, should consist of several layers (three or four in total), while still providing sufficient breathability.

Finding or making a mask that has both multiple layers and good breathability is not always easy; the medical consultant Chantal Sauvageau is well aware of this.

“Currently, with the types of fabrics that are made available to the general population, and with what is done by several companies, it is very, very variable,” she notes, stressing that we are still seeing in the market for masks with a single layer.

If the mask has at least two layers (even better, with the possibility of putting a disposable filter inside), if it still hugs the contour of the face and if it does not get wet quickly (so a small space between the tissue, the nose and the mouth), “we probably already have a gain,” concludes Dr. Sauvageau, who recalls that physical distancing remains the most effective measure to counter the spread of the virus.