

## TIPS FOR WEARING FACE MASKS

Feeling anxious or uncomfortable when wearing face masks for the first time is not uncommon. Here are a few tips you might find useful when wearing a face mask.



**Remind yourself that masks are safe.** Face masks allow for airflow around your mouth and do not reduce the amount of oxygen you are breathing in. Remember that they are helping to stop the spread of COVID-19.



**Focus on your breathing.** Try to slow down your breathing so that each breath is longer. Breathe deeply so that the breath comes from your stomach and not your chest. Imagine you are blowing your lungs up right to the bottom like a balloon.



**Practise mindfulness.** Often we can become anxious because we start to worry about the mask and what might happen while we are wearing it. Try to focus on the present moment by directing your attention to the colours, noises and smells around you in that moment.



**Practise wearing your mask.** When we are not used to wearing a mask it can make us feel anxious. Wearing a mask at home where we are calm can help us get used to how they feel. This can help us feel less anxious when wearing them outside or at work.



**Keep talking.** It is likely that many of the people around you are feeling uncomfortable about wearing face masks too. Talking can help with sharing tips and experiences and remind us we are not alone.



**Challenge negative thoughts.** Notice negative thoughts you have about your mask and challenge these with a more positive alternative. For example if you notice having the thought that "this mask is awful," tell yourself "I would prefer not to wear this mask but I am ok and I will be able to take it off soon."