**Covid-19-related Tip**

**Extending the life of your surgical masks**

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The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has resulted in a shortage of surgical masks being available to veterinarians in practice.

To get around this problem, you can order silver ion fabric masks which are reusable and machine-washable. They cost AUD$39.99 each (includes national postage) and there is no minimum order quantity. They come in various sizes and take approximately 7 days to arrive, depending on supply chain. Available at [https://tardi-bear-masks.myshopify.com/](https://tardi-bear-masks.myshopify.com/) or via email hinokimasks@gmail.com. Our practice has distributed one mask per staff member. Our team is split in two, so the mask is machine washed after their 3rd shift (or more often if required).

To extend the life of the surgical masks, it was recommended to use a dried out baby wipe inside the mask as a filter or even better, cut up pieces of disposable surgical kit wraps cut to size to fit on the inside of surgical mask. These are then disposed of at the end of the shift or as needed during the shift. We now keep any clean surgical kit wraps for this use. These can also be used inside disposable surgical masks as filters.

Staff spray their mask with alcohol after their shift so that it has evaporated by the next day. The mask is washed in a delicates wash bag (usually used for underwear) at 40 degrees after 3 shifts.

The biggest advantage I see in wearing a mask for consulting is that, when clients see you in a mask, it is an immediate reminder to keep their 1.5m distance and sends a message that our practice is taking COVID-19 and their safety seriously.
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Thank you to Dr Howard for sharing this tip.
It will appear in Issue 299 June 2020 of the C&T Series

Note from the Australian Veterinary Association

**COVID-19 Response: Reuse of surgical or P2/N95 masks (25 March 2020)**

Disposable surgical masks and P2/N95 masks are in short supply in veterinary and human health care organisations. Requests have been made to access unused medical stockpiles of surgical and P2/N95 masks for veterinary distribution, however surgical and P2/N95 masks may be in short supply for months as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. **Disclaimer - This is an evolving situation. The reuse of masks is not recommended so these guidelines are only recommended during circumstances of extreme need, such as during the COVID19 Pandemic. When you receive adequate stocks of PPE, please revert to recommended usage for your safety, as well as that of your staff, patients and clients.**

*Figures 2, 3, and 4. Cutting up disposable surgical kit wraps to size to extend life of the mask*