Week: 2nd – 8th August 2020

Big Idea of the Week:
Everyone is someone's loved one –
Wearing our masks correctly helps protect us all

Why should we wear cloth masks?

Coronavirus spreads easily from person to person.

If one person has the virus and spreads it to others, and then each of those people spreads it to others, within a short time, the virus can spread throughout a community.

Most people with coronavirus have only mild symptoms or do not show any signs and symptoms at all.

It is possible that you, or the person near you, have the coronavirus and do not even know it.

While most people who have the virus feel fine, they can spread it to others.

Some people who get the virus can get very sick and even die, especially people who are older or have other health conditions.

We all have loved ones who are older and have other health conditions.

Sometimes, people do not know they have other health conditions until they get worse and they get sick. Those other health conditions, even when we do not yet know about them, can make our bodies weaker in fighting other sicknesses, like coronavirus.

Let's all do our part to wear our masks correctly and protect our own and each other's loved ones.

Corona fet na we all fet!

How does a cloth mask help stop the spread of coronavirus?

When someone coughs, sneezes, sings, or even talks, they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus.

If someone is close to a person with coronavirus who coughs, sneezes, sings, or talks, they can breathe in the droplets and also get the virus.

Wearing a cloth mask correctly over your mouth and nose helps catch the spray of those small liquid droplets from going into the air or onto surfaces that could then spread to other people and make them sick.

That is why wearing a cloth mask correctly, even when we feel healthy, helps stop the spread of coronavirus and protects our loved ones.

Suggestions for people to interview

- Community leaders who promote and/or enforce use of cloth masks in their communities such as chiefs, councilors, and mammie queens

- Religious leaders who are leading in-person religious services and ensuring compliance of mask use in their place of worship

- Police officers or security officials who are involved in enforcement of mask use
- Community champions who always use cloth masks such as market women and traders, bafa/ataya/bar/restaurant owners, and traditional healers

Suggestions for questions for interviews and panel discussions

- What are cloth masks for? Why should we wear them?
- Is wearing a cloth mask enough to stop the spread of coronavirus?
- What does it mean to wear a mask correctly?
- What can I do if I can't afford a mask?
- Besides helping to prevent the spread of coronavirus, what are some other benefits to wearing a cloth mask?

Additional messages on correct wear and care of cloth masks

- Cloth masks used alone do not stop the spread of coronavirus, but they can help when used together with other actions.
    - The most effective actions to protect yourself and others against coronavirus are to wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, cough and sneeze into your upper arm or sleeve, and keep a safe distance of at least 1 meter or arms-stretched length from others.

- Masks made of cloth should be used by members of the public.

- Masks that you typically see worn by health workers in hospitals should only be used by health workers, people with symptoms of coronavirus, people caring for others with symptoms of coronavirus, and people who are more likely to get seriously sick from the virus including older people and people with other health conditions.

- An effective cloth mask should:
    - Be held to the head by ties or ear loops
    - Use multiple layers of fabric
    - Fit close against your face
    - Fully cover your mouth and nose and not fall down when talking
    - Allow for breathing without problem
    - Be able to be washed without damaging the mask

- There are different ways to make a cloth mask.
    - You can sew one yourself or give measurements to your tailor to make masks for you.
    - You can make one yourself that does not require sewing.
    - Make sure the size of the mask will fully cover your mouth and nose even when you are talking.

- It is important to know how to wear a cloth mask correctly and care for it safely.

    - Always wash a cloth mask before trying it on or wearing it.

    - Before putting on a cloth mask, wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol-based.

    - Cover your mouth and nose with the cloth mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.

    - Tie the mask behind your head or place the elastic loops over your ears.

    - Make sure the mask fits well. Move it around using the ties or elastic loops to get the best fit. Do not touch the cloth part of the mask.

    - Once you have put on the cloth mask, do not touch your face again until you take it off.

        - If you touch the mask, wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.

    - Cloth masks should not be lowered when speaking, coughing or sneezing. This is when they are most important!

    - To take off the mask safely, undo the ties or loops. Do not touch the front of mask or your eyes, nose and mouth. Carefully fold the cloth mask inside out and hold it by the ties or loops.

    - Wash the cloth mask right away with soap and water or put it in a plastic by itself until you can wash it later. After removing the mask from the plastic, throw the plastic away.

    - Dry the cloth mask well before using it again. Iron the cloth mask if possible.

    - Use a fresh, clean cloth mask every day. If the mask gets damp from sweat or from talking or breathing, replace it with a clean dry one.

- It is good to have at least two cloth masks so you have a clean, dry one you can wear while the washed one dries.

- Masks should not be placed on young children under the age of two or any person who cannot remove it themselves or tell someone they need help.

- Do not share cloth masks with others.

- Place cloth masks that have tears, cuts, or holes in a plastic and throw away.

- While the use of medical masks for hours at a time can be uncomfortable, it does not lead to poisoning from carbon dioxide (CO_2) or a shortage of oxygen.

Messages on the Government of Sierra Leone's enhanced regulations for coronavirus prevention that involve wearing cloth masks

Religious Practices

Traditional events like funerals, weddings, and naming ceremonies are times to show our love for one another. Let's help protect our loved ones by limiting such events to 35 people, wearing **cloth masks**, and keeping a safe distance of at least one meter or arms-stretched length, from each other.

Inter-district travel

Travel is open between districts again. Let's make sure coronavirus does not travel with us by washing our hands frequently with soap and water, wearing **cloth masks** correctly by covering our nose and mouths, keeping distance from each other in transport, and staying home and calling 117 if you have fever, tiredness, and cough.

When packing your things for travel, don't forget to take **cloth face** masks. All travelers must wear a face mask to move between districts.

Transport

Always put on a **cloth mask** when leaving your home and keep it on correctly when using public transport and riding in any private vehicle with more than one person.

Anyone using public transport, including drivers, who is not wearing a **mask**, may be fined one hundred thousand Leones (Le100,000) or detained by police. If a driver or passenger is found not wearing a mask for a second time, the vehicle will be seized.

Trade

When leaving your house for the shop, pharmacy, supermarket, or bank, don't forget to wear your **cloth mask**. All employees and customers must wear a face mask when at any shop, pharmacy, supermarket, or bank.

Any shop, pharmacy, supermarket, or bank found to have more customers inside than allowed or an employee not wearing a **mask** may be fined the first time and temporarily closed if found again.
- Shops/pharmacies: five hundred thousand Leones (Le500,000) first time
- Supermarkets/banks: one million five hundred thousand Leones (Le1,500,000) first time

Any shop, pharmacy, supermarket, or bank found to have customers inside who are not wearing a **mask** correctly may be fined one hundred thousand Leones (Le100,000) per customer the first time and temporarily closed if found again.

Washing your hands with soap and water and wearing a **cloth mask** when at the local market and market days not only help keep everyone safe from coronavirus, it also can save you money! If you do not wash your hands or wear a **cloth mask**, you may be fined twenty thousand Leones (Le20,000).

Entertainment

When going to any bar or restaurant, even if only for takeaway, make sure you wash your hands, wear a **cloth mask**, and keep a safe distance of at least one meter or arms-stretched length from others.

Any bar or restaurant found to have employees or customers not washing their hands, wearing a **cloth mask** correctly, or keeping a safe distance of at least one meter from others may be fined five hundred thousand Leones (Le500,000) the first time and temporarily closed if found again.

If you go to any social gathering or the beach with friends, keep your group to as few people as possible, wear **cloth masks**, and keep a safe distance of at least one meter, or arms-stretched length, from each other.

<u>Offices</u>

All employees, customers, and partners in public and private office buildings must wear **cloth masks**, keep a safe distance of at least one meter from others, and wash their hands with soap and water before entering the office.

Any government official found not wearing a **mask** in a public office building may be fined five hundred thousand Leones (Le500,000) or suspended from duty.

Any private business office found to have people inside who are not wearing a **cloth mask** may be fined five hundred thousand Leones (Le500,000) the first time and closed if found a second time.