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## Society

# New rules for children's mask purchase to come into effect Thursday

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Taipei, Feb. 25 (CNA) Surgical face masks for children aged 13 or below will soon be available every day of the week but will still be limited to four per child every seven days, the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) announced Tuesday.

Under the current face mask rationing system, people can only buy face masks on a rotating basis depending on the ID number on their national health insurance card.

People whose ID numbers end with an odd number can purchase masks on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, while those whose ID numbers end with an even number can buy masks on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

That restriction will be phased out for children 13 or under starting Thursday, the CECC said, but it will still be kept for adults, and the number of masks per person will remain at

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two per week for adults and four per week for children.

In another new rule that takes effect Thursday, parents will be able to buy masks on behalf of up to three children at a time by showing the NHI cards of the children, up from two children at a time previously.

Purchases can be made at more than 6,000 drugstores and pharmacies contracted by the NHI system around Taiwan.

The CECC did not explain why it decided to change the policy.

Also on Tuesday, Health and Welfare Minister Chen Shih-chung (陳時中), who heads the CECC, said domestic mask production is continuing to expand as nine new production lines will fully go online soon and are expected to add 720,000 masks per day this week.

According to official statistics, Taiwan currently produces 5.5 million masks per day and with the addition of the new production lines, the production this week is expected to go up to 6.2 million masks per day.

To date, there have been 31 confirmed cases of the coronavirus in Taiwan and one death from the disease.

(By Chang Ming-hsuan and Evelyn Kao)  
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