

Preventing waste in everyday life: Washable barrier masks in a hygiene set for a better eco-balance

Franco-Swiss entrepreneur is setting new standards for reusable masks of PET recycled fabrics.

Zurich, 29.04.2021 – The Basel-born company founder Sophie Chiquet has been creating, developing and producing uniforms and workwear for more than 20 years. At the outbreak of the pandemic, she immediately anticipated that the countless disposable masks could mean disaster for the oceans. Therefore, the innovative textile entrepreneur decided without further ado to develop 'Protective Clothing' alongside 'Corporate Fashion' and started to produce reusable fabric barrier masks. In close cooperation with experts from the science and medical sectors, the pioneer is now launching the third generation of washable fabric masks.

These are antiviral-treated, hydrophobically coated and certified according to AFNOR SPEC S76-001, CWA and OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100. They are not only kind to the environment, but also to the wallet, and with their functional design also serve as a fashion statement.

"Wearing masks is compulsory in many locations in Switzerland. Generally speaking, you should wear a mask when away from home and are unable to consistently keep your distance from others." This content is published on the website of the Federal Office of Public Health FOPH.

The website lists no less than nine different mask types – from the commonly known medical face mask to masks with a transparent window. While still new to us, the habit of wearing masks has been exemplified for many years in Asia. However, how can we succeed in protecting the environment and not overburdening the budget despite the increased need for protection?

Three million masks per minute

Recent studies estimate that 129 billion face masks are used worldwide every month. This amounts to three million masks per minute. Most of them are disposable face masks made of hard-to-degrade polypropylene, a thermoplastic material. On top of this, most masks consist of several layers whose composite materials make recycling impossible. The improper discard of disposable masks along roads, in parks, forests, lakes, rivers and the oceans contributes to environmental pollution.

WEARING IS CARING! Sustainability by design

Swiss design thinker and textile entrepreneur Sophie Chiquet was aware of this problem at the onset of the corona pandemic. Therefore, she launched washable, reusable barrier masks in a hygiene set during the lockdown, which have also been available to purchase individually online since April 2020. Since March 2021, the newest third-generation CQ masks in the tried-and-tested CQ hygiene set have also been available by subscription online and in selected pharmacies. True to the motto 'WEARING IS CARING!', right at the start of the Corona crisis, Sophie Chiquet also augmented her range of uniforms with a modular set of washable CQ hygiene masks including a sustainable CQ hygiene set for on-the-go. The barrier mask, filter and textile marker are delivered in two antiviral or hydrophobic 'WashMe/WearMe' fabric bags. This enables the entrepreneur to avoid unnecessary packaging waste during logistics and delivery.

With the washable CQ hygiene set, the glut of disposable masks is countered by a stylish and environmentally friendly alternative, which consumers can simply care for together with their home laundry and then reuse them as storage bags after washing. According to Sophie Chiquet, her well-conceived concept is "a set to love – despite the circumstances!".

Out of love for the environment and the community

The abbreviation 'CQ' stands for the brand 'chiQuet', as well as for 'Collective Quotient'. This is why the judicious entrepreneur donates a certain percentage of her turnover to environmental organisations that campaign for clean oceans. "The offer encourages mindful companies, consumers and people to take care of nature, the common good and the community," explains Sophie Chiquet.

CQ masks in 'CQ Hygiene Set To Go': A Swiss innovation on subscription

The 3rd generation of reusable, globally design-protected hygiene masks from the chiQuet brand has it all. All elements of the mask as well as the anti-viral treatment and the hydrophobic, biocompatible finish are OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100 certified and resistant to 50 washes. The viral reduction of the anti-viral treatment is 99.9% within 30 minutes. The treatments efficacy against COVID-19 has been tested according to the ISO18184-2019 standard. In addition, the masks are certified according to CWA and AFNOR S76-001. As a member of two interdisciplinary consortia, Sophie Chiquet is committed to the goal of continuously developing the reusable high-performance mask for everyday use, together with partners from industry, biotech, medtech, universities and private institutions within the EMPA, ReMask and Promask consortia. The result is chiQuet's third generation of barrier face masks called 'CQ-M3b', which are now available in the 'CQ Hygiene Starter Set To Go' both online for single sale or by subscription, as well as in pharmacies such as the **Amavita Apotheke Stadthaus in Basel.**

Easy on the environment and the wallet

A barrier mask in the 'CQ Hygiene Set To Go' is certified for at least 50 washes and, at a maximum cost of CHF 1.55 per starter set, is even less expensive than a disposable mask, with the advantage that all the accessories in the set are already included in the price. Therefore, the practical hygiene set beats disposable masks by far: "If you consider the frequency with which the washable face masks can be worn, they not only go easier on nature and the environment, but also on your wallet compared to conventional disposable masks," explains Sophie Chiquet.

In addition to the antiviral treatment and the filter protection film, the three-layer mask also scores with its particularly soft and breathable materials, which flatter the skin and increase wearing comfort. The individually adjustable, super-soft straps with adjustable stoppers, which can be adapted to any face shape from the age of 12, also contribute to this. Furthermore, companies have the option of branding or customising the CQ masks in the hygiene set in their corporate design to match their corporate fashion uniform (100% customising). Filters and masks are washable at 60°C. The CQ hygiene set concept including our 'Wash-ME/Wear-ME' fabric storage bags also improves safety while storing used or washed masks adequately.

Cooperation since April 2020 with swiss skin care expert 'Tal'

'ChiQuet Protective Clothing' and the Swiss skin care expert 'Tal' are demonstrating how national synergies respond to needs of our customers. 'Tal' has expanded its range to include various hygiene products and offers disinfectants made in Switzerland. The disinfectant gel not only convinces with its FOPH tested virucidal, bactericidal and mycobactericidal properties, but also with its simultaneous care of stressed hands. The food-compatible sprays are suitable for both hand and surface disinfection.

With its Swiss quality and short delivery distances, 'Tal' fits perfectly into the CQ hygiene set range of 'chiQuet Protective Clothing'.

And what's next in Sophie Chiquet's barrier mask and hygiene kit range? A mask made out of biodegradable materials? It would not surprise anyone who knows Sophie Chiquet. For the time being, the agile entrepreneur continues to work on exciting concepts for protective clothing as well as on an expansion of the company's product range. Details to follow shortly.

Sophie Chiquet: From Dior to corporate fashion uniforms to protective clothing and hygiene masks – 23 years of entrepreneurial agility

She has designed for 'Dior' and 'Hermès' in Paris, for 'Escada' and 'Laurel' in Munich and worked as head designer at 'fabric FRONTLINE ZÜRICH'. Sophie Chiquet founded her own company in 1998: 'CQ Corporate Fashion GmbH'. Renowned customers from aviation, gastronomy and the hotel industry, trade and services, industry in general, pharmaceuticals and banking appreciate the company's uniforms and workwear.

When the coronavirus struck, the entrepreneur began developing washable hygiene masks in hygiene sets for companies, freelancers (non-medical), individuals and pupils under the label "chiQuet Protective Clothing". She also implemented mass production at her selected production sites in Switzerland and Europe. "With the washable masks in the hygiene set, I would like to show Swiss companies and the general public an environmentally friendly alternative to disposable masks. Protective measures will remain a top priority for some time to come. By using washable hygiene masks, we can do our part to combat the pandemic in a safe and environmentally friendly way," the smart entrepreneur summed up.

About 'chiQuet Corporate Fashion' and 'chiQuet Protective Clothing'

The company CQ Corporate Fashion GmbH has been bridging the gap between scientific innovation, lifestyle, art and the fashion industry for over two decades. With a philosophy influenced by Dior, Hermès, Escada, Laurel and fabric FRONTLINE, the 'chiQuet Corporate Fashion' brand has specialised in transforming a company's corporate identity into its image clothing collection for over two decades. The innovative concept collections at the highest level are as individual as the companies and clients themselves. Design thinking expertise flows into each of these projects to take fashion to the next level.

CQ Corporate Fashion GmbH brings a UX-strategic holistic approach to interdisciplinary collaborations and provides the product design creations, prototyping phases including their iteration to production to develop a fashionable and scientifically substantiated as well as environmentally friendly product whose serial production is aligned with the certification criteria. For the worldwide commercialisation of the third generation of masks CQ Corporate Fashion are still looking for further licence partners to collaborate with. Sophie Chiquet is looking forward to hearing from you.

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