

# Face Mask

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## Key Points

- Merits: decreases the chances of spread of infection (COVID-19)
- De-merits: Headache, Perioral dermatitis
- Wear a mask with multilayers, should be washable, breathable & fabricated

## Introduction

Face masks save a life, some studies suggest that they lower the chances of spreading and catching the coronavirus, might reduce the severity of infection by reducing the dose of the virus. But the question is how definitive they work, or when to use them.

According to one investigation done by a Benn global health researcher at the University of Southern Denmark, who led the campaign in South African countries, Benn and his colleagues distributed locally produced masks among people, which is the world largest test of the mask, this test show masks are effective against the spread of COVID.19. One study posted in early August found that the mortality rate is four times lesser in areas where people used to wear a mask. <sup>1</sup> Another study shows that masks used in US State in April and May reduce the risk of COVID.19 by 90 percent. <sup>2</sup>

According to Westman's investigation, a clinical researcher, demonstrated a method to check the effectiveness of the mask. While doing an experiment his team uses laser and smartphone

cameras to determine how well 19 different clothes, stops droplets while the person is talking. According to their investigation some face masks proves very effective but some like thin polyester and spenders neck gaiters, which are stretchable and can be easily pulled over the mouth and nose. They reduce the size of released droplets which proves to be worse than wearing nothing. <sup>3</sup>

Some of the side effects of face masks are discussed below.

One of the most common side effects is bilateral headache, which after 30 min removal of mask goes away. <sup>4</sup> It causes Perioral dermatitis i.e., infection of skin around the mouth and this infection occurs because of saliva, sweat and moist vapor between skin and mask. <sup>5</sup>

When we compare a surgical mask with an N95 mask, it leads to higher skin temperature and humidity, increased heart rate, tight and itchy. So that's why N95 filters are never recommended to the public. Not only because of expensiveness but because of discomfort. <sup>6</sup> Wearing of face mask makes

exhaled air entering eyes and makes masses impulsively touch their eyes, if hands are contaminated, it may infect eyes.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, it eases at the same time, and make it worse also. for e.g., exhaled CO<sub>2</sub>, go back into the blood as a result body goes back into a stress state. WHO has recommended a face mask to stay away from COVID 19 along with social distancing.

Wearing of face mask is recommended, but there are a certain group of people who should not wear face mask such as children under age 2 years

1. one who has difficulty in breathing
2. who cannot remove the mask without anyone help.

The type of mask does not matter, the best mask is the one, which you can wear with comfort. N95 is only essential in incubators. So, we can say masks that cover the nose and mouth will be of benefit.

Wear a mask with multilayers. One should wear a mask on the mouth and nose. Should be multilayered, washable, breathable fabricated and should not be made up of vinyl, which completely covers the face and do not have valves in it.<sup>8</sup>

Wash your hands before putting on your mask. Avoid touching it while wearing it.

Untie strings and stretch your earlobes. Then hold ties and fold outside corners together. After removing wash your hands and do not touch

your nose and eyes. Wash with laundry detergent and let them dry.

One should wear a mask, to stay away from airborne diseases, but if there is limited supply these should be reserved for health care workers and should be used by single person, not exchanged as there is risk of accumulation of pathogens and the risk of getting disease.

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