

Face masks

Face masks reduce risk but do not nullify it; N99 more than N95, N95 more than surgical, surgical more than cloth, and cloth more than none. N99 and N95 are similar to European FFP3 and FFP2 respectively.

Depending on the setting, higher-grade face masks might be required. In Winter 2021/22, with high cases prevalence and Omicron variant, consider wearing at least an N95 when indoors. N99 are preferred in high-risk environments such as hospitals.

Masks should be comfortable. If yours isn't, try a different model. Because our faces all have different shapes, you might have to try 3-5 models before finding one that is comfortable – just like you would do with shoes.

Masks should be fitted. Fold their metal wire so that it fits around your nose without leaving gaps nor pinching it. Adjust the straps so that they press the mask on your face without straining your ears.

The virus is airborne: it floats in the air for a few hours after having been exhaled by an infected person. This means that **you should be wearing masks in poorly-ventilated public environments, even if no one is around.** For example, elevators.

Face masks work using two principles. First, **they filter part of the virus.** Even if it's smaller than their holes, because they capture it electrostatically. Second, **they slow the flow of air,** causing it to take longer to reach other people and thus reach them in a diluted form. This matters because **the fewer virus people inhale, the less the chances of falling sick and of severe outcomes.** It's like during an invasion: how many enemies invade determine whether the invasion will succeed.

Just like a helmet, **face masks reduce risk but do not nullify it.** And just like a person dying in a motorbike incident wearing a helmet doesn't mean that helmets don't work, cases in a masked population do not mean that masks do not work.

To protect yourself and others, your mask and theirs should be fitted. **Help others find a comfortable mask and help them adjust it so that it fits.**

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