

Studies Point to Effectiveness of Masks

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People everywhere are donning masks in public. Why? Medical experts have determined through recent studies that face masks combined with other preventive measures, such as frequent hand-washing and social distancing, helps slow the spread of COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [explains](#):

"Masks are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. This is called source control. This recommendation is based on what we know about the role respiratory droplets play in the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, paired with [emerging evidence](#) from clinical and laboratory studies that shows masks reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth. COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), so the use of masks is particularly important in settings where people are close to each other or where social distancing is difficult to maintain."

Keep in Mind

- CDC recommends that people wear masks in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Masks may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others.
- Masks are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings.
- Masks should NOT be worn by children under the age of 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Experts at [John Hopkins](#) agree:

"Face masks help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Because it's possible to have coronavirus without showing [symptoms](#), it is best to wear a face covering even if you think you are healthy. A mask helps contain small droplets that come out of your mouth and/or nose when you talk, sneeze or cough. If you have COVID-19 and are not showing symptoms, a face mask reduces your chance of spreading the infection to others. If you are healthy, a mask may protect you from larger droplets from people around you.

Different levels of masks are appropriate for different situations and needs. At Johns Hopkins Medicine, we currently require everyone entering our facilities to wear a mask, with the exception of children under 2."

The [Mayo Clinic](#) addresses the misperception that wearing a mask does nothing to protect the wearer from getting COVID-19:

"A cloth mask is worn to help protect others in case you have the virus. Countries that required face masks, testing, isolation and social distancing early in the pandemic seem to have had some success slowing the disease's spread. Common sense also suggests that some protection is better than none.

Cloth masks reduce the number of respiratory droplets a person releases into the air when talking, sneezing or coughing. The overall number of droplets in the air is reduced when more people wear masks and this reduces the risk of being exposed to COVID-19."

Some ask if wearing a mask can cause oxygen deficiency or carbon dioxide poisoning. The World Health Organization [assures](#):

"The prolonged use of medical masks can be uncomfortable. However, it does not lead to CO2 intoxication nor oxygen deficiency. While wearing a medical mask, make sure it fits properly and that it is tight enough to allow you to breathe normally. Do not re-use a disposable mask and always change it as soon as it gets damp. Medical masks (also known as surgical masks) are flat or pleated; they are affixed to the head with straps or have ear loops."

Wearing a mask is a necessary part in keeping yourself, your family, friends and neighbors healthy and safe.

Employees can find additional information on COVID-19 on the *FirstEnergy Today* portal, the [Corporate Health & Safety SharePoint](#) site or [MyFirstRewards.com](#). Please print and post this important information for employees who do not access the portal routinely.

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