**WHAT IS A SURGICAL MASK?**

PROTECTION OF WEARER FROM EXPOSURE TO VIRUS\(^2,3,4,5\)

The most effective masks have a nosepiece that bends to fit the face, reducing gaps through which virus particles can leak into or out of the mask.\(^2,5\)

PROTECTION OF PEOPLE NEARBY FROM VIRUS RELEASED BY WEARER\(^3,6\)

The highest quality are rated as ASTM Level 1 or higher, and are usually marketed as surgical or medical masks. Lower quality masks are not ASTM rated, and may be marketed as surgical, medical, procedure, dental, isolation, or laser masks.\(^8,10,20\)

Studies on risk reduction from use of masks by the general public have shown mixed results, some with a benefit and some with no effect.\(^3,4,14,15,16,17,18,19\)

CAUTION: Surgical style masks vary greatly in quality of filtration efficiency, fluid resistance and fit.\(^8,9\) The highest quality are rated as ASTM Level 1 or higher, and are usually marketed as surgical or medical masks.\(^8,20\) Lower quality masks are not ASTM rated, and may be marketed as surgical, medical, procedure, dental, isolation, or laser masks.\(^8,10,20\)

**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

[3] https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abc6197
[4] https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0002618
[5] https://doi.org/10.1083/eid/cis237
[6] https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-020-0843-2
[7] https://www.fda.gov/media/136449/download
[12] https://doi.org/10.1080/164569624.2013.866715
[14] https://www.n95decon.org/masksforpublic-use
[17] https://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid2605.190094
[19] https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.03.30.20047217

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