WHAT IS A SURGICAL MASK?*

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

The most effective masks have a fluid resistant outer layer that reduces droplet penetration.\(^7,8,9\)

The most effective masks have an electrostatic filtration layer to capture particles while being easy to breathe through.\(^10,11,12,13\)

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

Virus particles can leak into or out of the mask through gaps at the side.\(^2,6\)

Mask should cover chin to reduce leakage of virus particles into or out of the mask.\(^2\)

* A major recent review of SARS transmission studies suggests that face masks, eye protection and physical distancing are all protective for the public.\(^{14}\)

Other studies, with various viruses, have shown mixed results on the use of masks.\(^{4,15,16,17,18,19}\)

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