WHAT IS A SURGICAL MASK?

PROTECTION OF WEARER FROM EXPOSURE TO VIRUS

Virus particles

![Diagram showing how a surgical mask protects the wearer from virus exposure.]

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.

PROTECTION OF PEOPLE NEARBY FROM VIRUS RELEASED BY WEARER

Virus particles can leak into or out of the mask through gaps at the side.

Mask should cover chin to reduce leakage of virus particles into or out of the mask.

A major recent review of SARS transmission studies suggests that face masks, eye protection and physical distancing are all protective for the public. Other studies, with various viruses, have shown mixed results on the use of masks.

CAUTION: Surgical style masks vary greatly in quality of filtration efficiency, fluid resistance and fit. 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.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

[8] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7257731
[9] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7257731
[10] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7257731
[12] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7257731
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[18] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7257731
[19] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7257731
[20] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7257731

* - [19] A recent major review of SARS transmission studies suggests that face masks, eye protection and physical distancing are all protective for the public. Other studies, with various viruses, have shown mixed results on the use of masks.

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