

Dr. Patrick Flynn

June 30 at 10:10 AM .

"Here we go! I'll probably lose friends over this post, but that's OK. It's not my responsibility to make friends, it's my responsibility to speak truth. This post took me about 3 hours to craft at the airport this weekend while I wanted everything to be backed up with evidence.

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I've been relatively quiet on the whole "mask" dilemma, because, honestly, I don't have the time or energy to debate and really don't think that you can change people's minds on social media. People will believe what they want to believe, but if I say nothing, I'm just as bad as the ones I don't agree with. Just so that we're clear on where I stand and why, I thought I would explain my logic on why I DON'T agree with masks, and why that doesn't make me a selfish ignorant jerk.

Let's review the most common types of masks:

N95 Respirator - The N95 mask is an amazing tool that protects the person USING IT. The N95 Respirator was created for the user to wear in a contaminated environment to protect the user. Because it was designed for a contaminated environment, it doesn't filter what the person is breathing OUT.

In order for it to be at all effective, it must be fitted properly. We'd read various phrases, cough, open and close our mouths etc. to make sure the respirator kept a tight seal. In order for it to render itself effective, it must have a tight seal on the users face, which means no facial hair, and no crack along the outside. This is to keep particles from coming in. But it is NOT effective at protecting others. While using an N95, if the person using it has COVID-19, they will release that virus through the respirator, without it being filtered, and you are putting other people at risk. So although an N95 mask, when used properly, could protect the individual wearing it, it does not protect other.

To quote this article (with substantial empirical evidence) "Those N95's with a exhalation valve protects the person wearing the mask but not the subject being evaluated/operated on".

<https://medicine.uiowa.edu/.../n95-respirators-hepa-or-high-e...>

So essentially, if the whole family wears properly-fitting N95 masks, they are doing nothing to protect grandma. Grandma has to wear one to protect herself, but the person wearing the mask is not protecting someone who isn't. Save the N95 for the immune-compromised and for health care workers working in contaminated environments. But if you are a COVID-carrier, and go into the public, this mask will do you and others no good.

Surgical masks are there to protect individuals from splashes or particles in a sterile environment. When they are sterile, in a room with negative pressure, and in a sterile environment, the mask offers protection from large particles and microbes in the air. HOWEVER, if a nurse were to go into a "dirty" or "contaminated" room, once they leave that room, it is considered contaminated, and the mask must be thrown away. I was a nurse extern at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital where these kiddos receiving chemotherapy had ZERO white blood cells. We took all necessary precautions to protect them. Double doors getting into their room, gown, mask, gloves etc in the room. When we exited the room you would throw it all away, and grab new things when you entered the room again. Once out of the room, you were immediately considered contaminated. When people are using surgical masks in public, they are immediately contaminated. Using the mask over and over means more and more particles are being trapped in the mask increasing their risk of transmission more than if you weren't wearing one at all.

"If worn properly, a surgical mask is meant to help block large-particle droplets, splashes, sprays, or splatter that may contain germs (viruses and bacteria), keeping it from reaching your mouth and nose. Surgical masks may also help reduce exposure of your saliva and respiratory secretions to others.

While a surgical mask may be effective in blocking splashes and large-particle droplets, a face mask, by design, does not filter or block very small particles in the air that may be transmitted by coughs, sneezes, or certain medical procedures. Surgical masks also do not provide complete protection from germs and other contaminants because of the loose fit between the surface of the mask and your face."

<https://www.fda.gov/.../n95-respirators-surgical-masks-and-fa...>

Therefore, the surgical mask can protect from splashes that are contaminated, however, should be thrown away frequently as the people you are exposed to constantly changes. If the microbes are on your mask, and you continue to use it, you're breathing them in, versus fresh air. So using the same surgical mask all week long, isn't the way they were meant

to be used. In fact, it may be putting the immune compromised at risk by continuing to carry the germs you've been exposed to, in the mask.

The CDC is recommending the use of cloth masks to SLOW the spread...because the spread is still inevitable, they say that the cloth masks could slow this down. However, the evidence shows that cloth masks can actually increase the rate of infection.

Here is an example of a randomized control trial comparing cloth masks to surgical masks. They found that there was a 97% transmission of particles in the cloth mask group, and increase rate of infection. "Moisture retention, reuse of cloth masks and poor filtration may result in increased risk of infection."

<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/5/4/e006577>

If we truly wore surgical masks and threw them away after each individual use, that may do some good, but the supply of masks are so low, they are being told to use and reuse masks as much as possible to not waste supply. But the bottom line is, there will ALWAYS be viruses and bacteria putting us at risk. It's impossible to live in a bubble, and if we did, we would die! Our microbiome is so diverse and intricate, and has thousands of strains of bacteria and viruses that populate our bodies every day. We need bacteria, we need germs, healthy people need to be exposed on a daily basis to train our immune system to fight. For those that are immune compromised, they need to be protecting themselves right now and staying home as much as possible. But for the healthy individuals, the best thing we can do is to actually become exposed, achieve immunity, and that will protect those immune compromised.

I know COVID is real. And people have horror stories of becoming infected. Now, more than ever, it's time to make certain we are caring for our health however we know how. Decreasing inflammation, supporting our immune response, getting adjusted...these things will not make you immune to the virus, but if you are exposed, you're more likely to recover from it faster than the average person.

Furthermore, the CDC even says someone can test positive for the virus if they even have the common cold.

"A positive test result shows you might have antibodies from an infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. However, there is a chance a positive result means that you have antibodies from an infection with a virus from the same family of viruses (called coronaviruses), such as the one that causes the common cold".

<https://www.cdc.gov/.../2019-n.../testing/serology-overview.html>

Why has the narrative changed from death rate to number of cases? Because the number of cases will rise for sure! (Especially if the common cold can cause a positive test). But the death rate is still incredibly low. Do we want to make this world safer for people? Why not banning fast food? Making cigarettes illegal?

Article written by PhD, that outlines more research on it:

<https://www.rcreader.com/.../masks-dont-work-covid-a-review-o...>

What can we do to slow the spread? Wash your hands. Stop touching your face. Don't pass judgement on others if they choose to wear a mask or not. I still don't see the logic behind it, and if I did, I'd wear one! I believe it is giving people a false sense of security. The virus will find them, mask or not, and if you're continuing to make lifestyle choices that hinder your health but still wear a mask for protection, your logic is flawed. Wear a mask to protect from a respiratory virus, but still smoke like a chimney. Wear a mask to protect your immune system, but fuel your body with Doritos and hohos. We can do better than this!

P.S. if you don't agree with me, that's OK. Please post your response with evidence. Don't debate based on emotions and personal attacks. Support what you believe with facts and we can have an intelligent conversation. Much love. ❤️"