

Santa Barbara Wellness for Life

Supporting You in Creating a Lifetime of Wellness, Vitality and Longevity

The Facts about Masks

There is a lot of confusion about the Coronavirus in general, and one of the key areas of stress, discontent and confusion is all about masks. "To Wear or Not to Wear", that is the question.

To be honest, I hate wearing a mask. However, due to the evidence, I have been wearing them more and more often. And as soon as I know that I don't need to wear a mask, I take it off.

Here are the keys:

- Wearing a mask can significantly reduce the likelihood of you exposing someone else if you are infected, and as we know you can be infected and asymptomatic, therefore exposing others. Additionally, those people who get Covid19 usually are infected and expelling the virus for 2-3 days before they first express symptoms and up to 14 days for some.
- The quantity of droplets that get through the mask are greatly reduced during normal breathing, and a significant percentage with sneezing, coughing or yelling.
- Wearing a mask is a barrier to the virus entering your mouth or nose if someone around you is expelling the virus at a high rate. The protection of yourself is not as high as protecting others, however it is significant and especially so relative to the potential degree of infection if you are exposed when wearing a mask.

Key Point: Research clearly shows that the fewer viral particles get into you, the less severe your infection is apt to be. This is very critical information.

Two key situations showed that factories where large outbreaks occurred ended up with 95% asymptomatic infections. This high ratio of mild cases is attributed to everyone had been wearing masks, and thus, less of the viral particles got into each person. Additionally, eighty-one per cent of the infected passengers and staff on a cruise ship—all of whom had been issued masks—remained asymptomatic.

So, please wear your mask when spending time with others, especially so if it is more than 10 minutes and within less than 6 feet, and especially if it is indoors. And of course be extra cautious around anyone who is at high risk.

It is clear not everyone understands viral exposure as I see people driving in their cars alone, riding a bike, walking on the sidewalk not near anyone, and they have a mask on. It is not necessary in these situations, you are not getting as much oxygen and you are getting more CO₂. Additionally, you are concentrating more bacteria (or virus if you are infected) within your mask the longer you have it on. **Let's be smart and logical, wear it when you need to and please don't wear it when it is not helping anyone.**

When not to wear masks!

1. you are driving in your car alone, or with someone you have regularly been exposed to (like your spouse).
2. you are exercising, or going for a walk "outdoors".
3. you are working in your yard alone or with a family member you are living with.
4. you are in your house, alone or with those you are regularly in close contact with.
5. you are parked on the side of the road looking at a beautiful sunset and no one is near you.
6. you are outdoors eating or having a glass of wine with friends and you are properly distancing.

The key regarding airborne exposure, which is by far the greatest cause of getting COVID-19, is to not end up in a room for an extended period of time with someone who "could" be carrying the virus and does not have

a mask on. Outdoors is still far safer, but not if people near you are shouting, speaking loudly, singing, coughing or sneezing! Masks are critical in this situation and may not even be enough to protect you, or them from you.

In June a group in Georgia decided to prove once again (unintentionally) that small spaces with lots of people, over an extended period of time was the perfect way to infect lots of people! **At this Youth Camp where the Staff members wore mask but the attendees did not the infection ended up with 76% testing positive** for Covid-19, even though all were negative with pre-camp testing up to 12 days prior to starting camp.

From the CDC's website: "The multiple measures adopted by the camp were not sufficient to prevent an outbreak in the context of substantial community transmission. Relatively large cohorts sleeping in the same cabin and engaging in regular singing and cheering likely contributed to transmission (9). Use of cloth masks, which has been shown to reduce the risk for infection (10), was not universal."