



The Lexington Group, Inc.

Your Employee Assistance Program

Wearing Masks in 2021

As COVID-19 restrictions and rules continue into their second year, we know that many people are genuinely concerned about their health or the health of their loved ones. At the same time, we know many people are also concerned about wearing masks. Chances are that you've heard various theories about COVID-19 on social media, or from friends or family members. General discontent with our current situation has caused misconceptions about face coverings.

Here are 3 face-mask myths to be wary of:

Myth: Wearing a cloth mask does not protect you from getting COVID-19.

Wearing a mask *does* prevent the spread of COVID by stopping tiny droplets of moisture expelled by breathing, talking, coughing, or sneezing from becoming airborne. Without a mask, these tiny droplets can float up to 30 feet. Cloth masks catch more or less of these droplets depending on the material, how tightly the fibers are woven and how snugly it fits. This is also why it's very important not to touch the front of your mask, wash your hands after removing the mask and stay 6 feet apart even while wearing a mask.

Myth: Wearing a mask will increase the amount of carbon dioxide in my body.

Health care providers have worn masks for extended periods of time with no adverse health reactions for decades. There is no risk of hypoxia, which is low oxygen levels, in healthy adults. Although masks catch tiny liquid droplets, small molecules like carbon dioxide can freely pass through surgical and cloth masks. If you feel uncomfortable in your mask, take a few deep breaths through your nose and take a break from talking.

Myth: Humidity in masks will make me sick.

Breathing, like sweating, is one of the ways our body regulates temperature. So, wearing a mask can feel stifling due to warm air in your face covering. The only health concerns are for those with severe asthma in warmer climates or people who struggle with lung disease. High levels of humidity are known to alleviate flu symptoms and new research suggests humid environments may similarly lessen the severity of COVID-19. People also worry that the humid environment would cause mold to grow. While it is true surfaces can get moldy, your mask would have to be in an enclosed humid environment for over 24 hours for there to be any concern. If you are still apprehensive about moisture buildup, bring back-up masks to switch out and wash them regularly to completely eliminate your worries.

Masks are still our best defense against the virus:

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Masks protect you, but are even more effective in preventing others from getting sick. Not wearing a mask means you are making a decision about other peoples' safety and increasing their risk of getting COVID-19. Both asymptomatic and symptomatic people are at risk for long term side effects like blood clots and brain fog as well as permanent medical conditions like lung scarring and heart damage. About 1 in 100 people diagnosed with Coronavirus pass away.

COVID vaccines do not provide 100% protection, which means 1 in every 20 people who are vaccinated can still get COVID-19. Widespread COVID protection requires time; it takes two weeks after your last dose of the vaccine to reach full effectiveness and about 7 in every 10 people must be vaccinated to secure your community.

Wearing a mask while we strive towards herd immunity is important since not everyone will be able to get vaccinated to protect themselves. There are millions of people who rely on others following guidelines for their own wellbeing and their family's safety. Certain people may not be able to get vaccinated, including: cancer patients, individuals who have Coronavirus or recently recovered from the virus, some elderly patients and other immunocompromised people, as well as individuals who are pregnant or lactating, and children under 16.

Remind yourself that everyone is in this unusual situation together and wearing a mask is a gesture of kindness to others. When you are feeling stressed, it might make you feel better knowing that you are helping your community and preventing the spread of COVID-19. Safer communities mean: secure schools, relief for local businesses, protection for loved ones, those with vulnerable health conditions, and a return to economic stability. Until our community is secure, we'll need to remain vigilant, continue masking, hand washing, avoiding large crowds and practicing social and physical distancing for a while longer to protect our neighbors and ourselves.

Tips for added security:

- Add a filter or disposable mask under your cloth mask
- Get a mask brace or mask tape for a tighter seal
- Get a mask bracket or filter under your mask so the mask does not touch your nostrils or mouth
- Change your mask if it gets wet

If you are struggling and feeling overwhelmed, we understand. This is an especially troubling time; we can help you with counseling support, financial, community, and legal resources. The Lexington Group is equipped to address these issues and connect you with someone who can help you work through your concerns.

How The Lexington Group Can Help

The Lexington Group can help set up confidential Online or Face-to-Face Counseling. Caring and personalized help is at your fingertips. Request service and find out additional information at:
[The-Lexington-Group.com](https://www.thelexingtongroup.com)

For 24/7 support call:

UNITED STATES & ENGLAND
1-800-676-4357

CANADA
1-800-567-4343

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1-855-328-1185

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