

TO WEAR, OR NOT TO WEAR THERE REALLY ISN'T A QUESTION - MASKS

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Summary

This is an essay discussing masks in connection to the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. In Asia there is little discussion as to whether to wear a mask or not. In Japan whenever I go to a supermarket, or get on a train or bus, or even walk on the street, everyone is wearing a mask with no arguments or shouting matches. But in the rest of the world, especially Europe and America, it has become a hot topic, a political issue, and an emotional dispute that has caused temper tantrums, fist fights, and even murder. There really is no real issue. Masks stop things from going in and out of your nose and mouth. They are a good defense against viruses and other unwanted particles, gases, and bacteria that could create trouble for you and the people around you. In all cases, during this pandemic, the best thing to do is always wear a mask when meeting other people.

In January in the year 2020 the world was confronted with a new and deadly novel coronavirus that started in Wuhan, China and swiftly traveled all over the globe making many people sick and killing a number of those infected. In Asia many people began wearing masks on a daily basis, and slowed down the virus considerably, while authorities were also tracing and testing everyone they knew who had contact with infected people. Most of Asia had a small percentage of infected people and a very low number of deaths compared to countries like Italy, Brazil, and the USA. In other words, one thing is true. Masks help stop the spread of this disease.

Special Note: Masks are good, but I have my own set of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).
When I took an airplane from Japan to the USA in March 2020, I wore light gloves, a mask, goggle glasses, a hoodie sweatshirt so my arms and head wouldn't touch the seat, a small towel to cover the tray, and an i-pad pointer to touch the movie controls.

The US government has done a great disservice to the American people by giving them various kinds of mask advice like, "Don't wear a mask. It's bad for you. You will touch your face more often." This was the advice given at the beginning of the pandemic in America in March 2020. As time went by, the government kept changing its tune - wear a mask - don't wear a mask - wear a cloth mask - use a scarf - use a handkerchief - don't use N95 masks, save them for the hospitals and nursing homes - and on and on. Of course this only caused confusion for the regular people trying to stay safe and healthy.

The government should have done the homework and research, and come to the correct conclusion, that masks and other PPE stop the virus and save lives.

**I can't believe we've been having a pandemic for close to a year,
and people are still arguing about wearing a mask or not!**

President Trump made things even worse by politicizing the mask with his macho stance saying that wearing a mask was a sign of weakness. Macho men don't wear masks!!! Trump was worried he wouldn't look good on TV or in photos, and that it would be an uncool style. So, even though the government finally recommended wearing masks, Donald Trump said that the government recommended wearing a mask, but he wasn't going to wear one.

Apparently President Trump doesn't know the famous proverb,

“Actions speak louder than words.”

If a father is talking to his son, and he is smoking a cigarette, and he tells his son, “Don't smoke. Smoking is bad for you.” Obviously the son will try smoking, because he sees his father smoking everyday. So, of course, Trump supporters were asked if they would wear a mask. Often the answer was, “If the President isn't going to wear a mask, I'm not going to wear a mask.”

1. WHEN YOU'RE SICK, WEAR A MASK.

I've lived in Japan for many years. When I first arrived in Asia, I saw many people wearing white cloth masks. I asked some of my Japanese friends about it. I found out how polite and considerate Japanese people can be. When they get sick with a cold or flu, they wear a mask so they won't give it to other people. In other countries it may not seem so obvious. In Japan and most of Asia there are so many people on the street, on the train, on the subway, in the elevator, etc. It's crowded everywhere! If you take a crowded morning train or subway, people are literally squeezed in like sardines in a can, and the mask courtesy immediately becomes understandable. Even the streets are so gridlock tight, it's like entering a huge rock festival. It's just the morning rush hour of people walking to their companies from the train or subway station. If you're sick, you can easily give it to someone else.

So, yes, you should wear a mask when you're sick, so you won't give it to anyone else.

2. WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE SICK, WEAR A MASK.

COVID-19 is an insidious disease. It's very contagious and many infected people are asymptomatic - no signs of sickness, no coughing, no fever, no aches or pains - no symptoms whatsoever. Because there are many people who have the virus and don't know it, it is safer to always wear a mask in case you have it, so you can stop the spread of this disease.

3. WHEN YOU'RE NOT SICK, WEAR A MASK.

Okay, I'm not sick. I don't have to wear a mask. Wrong! This is a new virus. The doctors and scientists still don't understand all the characteristics of this sickness. But one thing is for sure. Masks keep things out of your nose and mouth. If you go to the 3M website for masks, you'll find over 50 different kinds of masks that protect you from dust, gases, bacteria, PM2.5(tiny pollution particles), paint, etc.

During the SARS outbreak in 2003 I had to travel to Taiwan with some business friends. We weren't wearing masks, but everybody in the airport in Taiwan was wearing masks. All the passengers, staff, airline people, well just about everyone except us had masks on. The outbreak was soon over and I'm sure the masks helped. If you don't believe me, just look at the 3M mask website and see how many masks they sell to keep things out of your nose and mouth, even viruses.

4. WHEN YOU GET OVER COVID-19, WEAR A MASK.

Doctors don't know when the contagious part of COVID-19 is over. If you are tested for the virus, and it is negative, maybe you are not contagious, but the tests aren't a 100% sure. There's a percentage of possible mistakes in the testing results. Also, there has been anecdotal evidence of people catching the virus 2 or 3 times. So, you may be immune for a while. You may be immune for life. The virus may be dormant in your body and become active again. Nobody knows for sure yet.

When I was young, I had the measles. I've been told by doctors that I'm immune. I can't get the measles again, because my body knows how to stop it. That is not true for most colds and flus, because these viruses mutate so fast that the next time you meet it, it's a new cold or flu and you have no defense against it.

So for COVID-19, if you're sick, not sick, don't know if you're sick, have it, or you've recovered and don't know if you're immune or contagious - WEAR A MASK!!!

Only if we have herd immunity, and no one can catch it again, then it is perfectly safe not to wear a mask. Herd immunity means everyone has gotten a vaccine, or everyone has antibodies after being sick and recovering, and now there is a natural or man-made defensive protection against infection or re-infection.

SO IN CONCLUSION:

1. WHEN YOU'RE SICK, WEAR A MASK.
2. WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE SICK, WEAR A MASK.
3. WHEN YOU'RE NOT SICK, WEAR A MASK.
4. WHEN YOU GET OVER COVID-19, WEAR A MASK.

If everyone in the world wore masks for a few weeks, the virus would have nowhere to go,
and it would be finished.

FINAL NOTE: If you can't wear a mask for any kind of reason, you can also buy
clear face shields that wrap around the forehead and cover your face or
clear chin shield face guards that wrap around the chin and ears, and cover
you mouth and nose. These two products don't feel so confining and
your mouth and face are visible.