



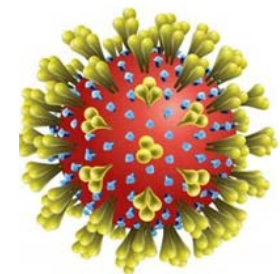
Protect yourself  
and others...BUT  
Masks may not be  
the answer!

For more information, go to the HealthInfo  
website:

<https://www.healthinfo.org.nz/coronavirus.htm>



**Can Wearing a  
Mask Protect you  
from Coronavirus?**



## Best Advice

The best advice to help protect you from a whole host of infections, including COVID-19, is:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and regularly throughout the day
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Cover all coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the elbow of your arm
- Stay at home if you are sick.



## When to Wear a Mask

When is it best to wear a mask?

- If caring for a sick person and they are in a room with others, ensure they wear a surgical mask at all times to prevent or minimise the spread of the virus when they cough or sneeze.
- Wear a mask only if you are coughing or sneezing and are with other people in order to protect them.

Replace the mask if it becomes wet or damaged.

## A Good Idea?

Is wearing a mask a good idea?

**NO!**

- Wearing masks at home is not necessary for healthy people, and is an unnecessary cost
- It can create a false sense of security that can lead to neglecting other essential measures such as hand hygiene and cough etiquette
- If you use a mask incorrectly, it will be less effective in reducing the risk of spreading the virus.



Other reasons why face masks are not ideal:

- Not all masks fit perfectly around your nose and mouth
- It is hard to keep it on for a long period of time
- Once the mask becomes moist or visibly soiled its effectiveness is lost
- If a mask is torn or otherwise damaged, remove immediately
- The minute you scratch your nose or touch your mouth behind the mask, lift the mask to the top of your head or under your chin, you've lost the protection that the mask is supposed to offer.

## Use it Properly

If you do use a mask, it is important to know how to use it correctly:

- Wash your hands
- The mask should cover your nose and mouth with no gaps between your face and the mask
- To ensure the mask fits firmly across your nose, using both hands, mold the nosepiece to the shape of your nose. Do not 'pinch' with one hand as this may result in an improper fit and not be as effective
- Avoid touching the mask while using it.

It is also important to know how to remove it correctly:

- Don't touch the front of the mask – remove it by the lace or elastic at the back
- Discard single-use masks after each use and dispose of them in a waste basket immediately
- After removal or whenever you inadvertently touch a used mask, always wash your hands
- Replace masks with a new, clean, dry mask as soon as they become damp or torn
- Do not re-use single-use masks.

