



# TO YOUR HEALTH

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

## Making the Most Out of Face Masks During an Epidemic

### TIPS & TRICKS

As we continue to navigate and live through this pandemic, face coverings have become a part of everyday life. Indeed, wearing a mask is an important part of keeping you and others healthy right now. Masks act as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This is called source control.

Although masks play a key role in preventing the spread of COVID-19, there's just one caveat, they can be a bit uncomfortable and muffle conversations. They can also hide important facial clues about the speaker's message and emotions. This can make it hard to understand speech, especially for those with hearing loss.

#### 9 TIPS ON COMMUNICATING WHILE WEARING A MASK

Now, more than ever, it's important to make an extra effort to effectively communicate. Here are some ways you can ensure you're communicating well while wearing a mask:

1. Make sure you have your communication partner's attention



2. Face your partner directly, and make sure nothing is blocking your view
3. Speak more clearly and louder than you normally would, without shouting
4. Reduce background noise when possible and be aware that physical distance can also make hearing more difficult
5. Talk a little louder and a little slower
6. Use your hands and your body language
7. Ask your partner if they understood you; if not, say it a different way or write it down
8. Move to a quiet place if you can

9. If you're talking with someone new, ask if there's anything you can do to make communication easier for both of you

When it comes to communicating while wearing a mask it's really all about adapting and making adjustments as needed. If you're not able to effectively communicate offer to use another method like a smartphone or paper and pen to get your message across.

### MASKS: DO'S & DON'TS

Pre-pandemic most of us probably had never or very rarely had to wear a mask. Although mask-wearing is fairly straightforward, there are some basic do's and don'ts that you need to keep in mind:

- » Do wash your hands before putting on your mask
- » Do put it over your nose, mouth, and secure it under your chin
- » Do try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- » Don't wear the mask if you're having trouble breathing. You may have it on too tight; try to adjust until it's comfortable
- » Don't take your mask off by touching the front of the mask
- » Do untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops to take off
- » Do fold outside corners together

Also, be careful to not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing and washing hands immediately after removing a mask. Lastly, if you have a reusable mask make sure you clean it daily. Most masks are machine washable and can be tossed in with your regular laundry. If you have disposable masks, throw them away after each use.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.