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FEATURED TOPIC | THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2020

## 7 tips for helping your child wear a mask



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone over the age of 2 wear a mask while in public to slow the spread of COVID-19. Some schools will recommend or require masks as students return to the classroom this fall.

To make this transition easier for children, it's important that parents and guardians prepare them for prolonged mask wearing before school starts.

### Here are 7 tips for helping your children get used to wearing a mask:

#### 1. Explain why.

Children need to understand the reason why they will need to wear masks. Explain how masks prevent germs from spreading among people, and keeps others safe and healthy. Let your children's questions guide your conversation. Listen and answer their questions with facts in a way they can understand.

#### 2. Demonstrate good mask etiquette.

Children model behaviors of the adults in their lives, so set a good example with your actions. Be consistent about wearing a mask each time you are in public. Show your children how to keep their mask over their mouth and nose. Explain that they should not touch or share their mask.

#### 3. Practice at home.

Have your children practice wearing a mask for a few hours while at home. A good time to start is when they are allowed screen time, as they are more likely to forget about the mask. Have your children practice talking clearly while wearing a mask so others can understand what is being said. You can make practice fun while playing board, card or I spy games.

#### 4. Play pretend.

For younger children, provide masks for stuffed animals and dolls during playtime. This can lessen any fears your children have with seeing other people in masks.

## 5. Get creative.

Allow your children to personalize masks with fabric markers or patterned fabric. There also are masks available with cartoon characters or sports teams that can showcase your children's personality and preferences. Your children could make a mask out of a favorite bandana or scarf, as well.

## 6. Take a photo.

Enlist the help of family and friends. Ask them to send your children photos of themselves wearing masks. In return, your children can send photos of themselves in a mask. Look at the photos, and reinforce how great your children, family and friends look in masks.

## 7. Pack extra masks.

As your children prepare to return to school, plan on sending extra masks each day. Children can be messy, and having backup masks on hand ensures they always have a clean mask to wear.

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### Learn more about children and COVID-19:

- Read our [Q&A about how to wear and care for a cloth face covering](#).
- [Complete your COVID-19 back-to-school checklist](#).
- Read [4 debunked myths about face masks](#).
- Learn [how to talk to your kids about COVID-19](#).

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*For the safety of our patients, staff and visitors, Mayo Clinic has strict masking policies in place. Anyone shown without a mask was either recorded prior to COVID-19 or recorded in a non-patient care area where social distancing and other safety protocols were followed.*

