



## Help your Child Feel Good about Using and Seeing Others Wearing Face Masks



Explain the reasons for using a face mask as simply as possible. Frequent review of pictures, videos, and picture stories may help your child learn and become more familiar.



Your child may need to wear a face mask at times when leaving the house. Since it may take weeks or even months for a child to become comfortable with wearing it, start now and practice often to help make wearing face masks as positive as possible.



To help your child tolerate and become more comfortable with how the face mask feels on the skin, look for face mask fabrics, textures, and colors/patterns your child will tolerate and prefer.



Your child will be seeing other people wearing masks. It may be hard to recognize who the person is or determine facial expressions and feelings. Your child might associate face masks with something scary, such as a traumatic experience, a character in a movie, or a Halloween costume. When at home, have family members wear their face masks at various parts of the day so your child can see you in different situations.



Have your child see, hold, touch, and wear the face mask in stages. Provide praise, tickles, tokens, tapping elbows, cheering, or other rewards after each success. Each step may take a different length of time for your child to become comfortable. Examples of steps are:

1. See the face mask in different places in your house.
2. See family members wear their face masks at home. You can also put the mask on a favorite doll or stuffed animal.
3. Touch the face mask with hands.
4. Hold the face mask in hands.
5. Hold the face mask closer to the face, and even smell it.
6. Have the mask touch the face.
7. Let the mask cover the nose and mouth.
8. Stretch the face mask around the ears.
9. Wear the mask on the face.



At first, your child may be touching the face mask often, playing with it, or taking it on-and-off. It may be helpful to have your child wear the mask during favorite activities such as when watching a favorite video, playing a favorite game, or getting a piece of a favorite snack. This will show your child that the mask isn't only for situations that are unfamiliar or scary.

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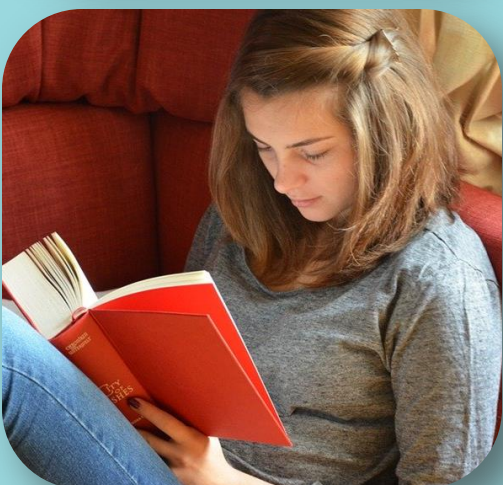
Through a partnership with Kohl's Cares,  
Children's Specialized Hospital is improving access  
to care for children with special health care needs.



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I Can Stay Healthy by  
Wearing a Face Mask





I have been staying at home more because of the coronavirus. The coronavirus are germs that make people sick.

Coronavirus germs are so small that I can't see them.

Coronavirus can be passed from person to person and make me and other people sick.

That is why I can't go to the places I usually do.





The coronavirus can be spread through the air.

Some ways that it spreads are when people breathe, cough or sneeze.



Wearing a face mask is an important way I can prevent coronavirus from spreading.

When I leave my house, there are many places I should wear a face mask.

Most of the time, these places will be where there are groups of people in one place.

There are different types of face masks.



Doctors, nurses, and others who work in health care wear certain types of face masks.





There are other types of face masks for people like me.

I can help make my own mask or even decorate it for fun!

The mask should cover my mouth and nose.



If the face mask feels uncomfortable to me,  
I can let someone know.

Together, we can try different ways to make it  
feel better for me when I wear it.

I can get used to the feeling by practicing  
wearing it at home.





After coming inside, I wash my hands after I take off my face mask.



If my face mask is made of cloth, I need to wash it in the washing machine to keep it clean.



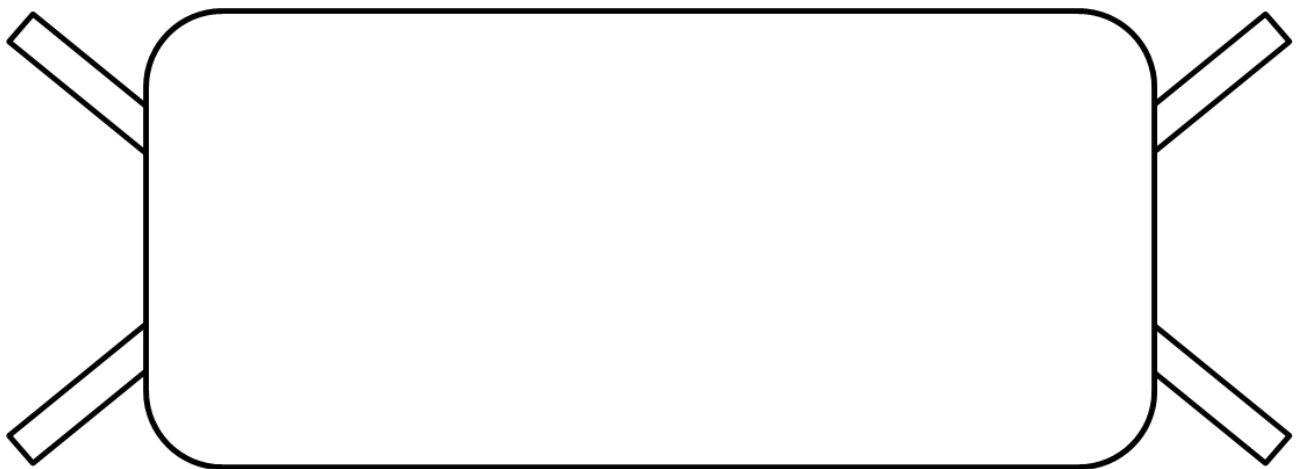
I can wear a face mask next time I leave the house.

Wearing a face mask keeps me from getting and spreading coronavirus.

It helps keep me and everyone else healthy and safe.



Try decorating pictures of these face masks  
in ways that you like.





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[www.childrens-specialized.org](http://www.childrens-specialized.org)

Developed by Michaela Domaratzky, M.D. Candidate, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in partnership with Children's Specialized Hospital and The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, New Jersey Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities Program (NJLEND).



Through a partnership with Kohl's Cares, Children's Specialized Hospital is improving access to care for children with special health care needs.



# A Parent's Guide

## Helping your child wear a face mask

Your child may have challenges or discomfort when wearing a face mask. After talking about the importance of face masks, ask your child about what might be bothersome and any preferences in type, color, or style. Once you understand, you can help work with your child to help make the face mask more comfortable to wear.



### ABOUT FACE MASKS

#### WHY

Coronavirus can be spread when we breathe, cough or sneeze. Wearing a mask reduces spread from person to person.

#### WHO

People who wear face masks help prevent the virus from spreading. Children under the age of two and those with breathing challenges should not wear face masks

#### HOW

When wearing a face mask, make sure it covers both the nose and mouth. After using the face mask, remove it and be sure to wash hands. Disposable masks should be thrown in the trash and fabric masks should be washed in the washing machine.

#### WHERE

Use face masks when in public settings, especially in places where you are in close contact with others such as a grocery store, laundromat, pharmacy, or bank.

#### TYPES OF MASKS

Depending on your child's comfort level and face shape



Face mask



Neck Gaiter

### GETTING COMFORTABLE

#### Mask Anxiety

If your child expresses fear over the mask, address what is bothering them. This may be due to fear of the mask itself, itchiness, feeling hot or difficulty breathing.

- Include your child in making the mask or even **decorating** it with stickers or using fun fabrics
- Have a child feel more comfortable with face masks by seeing other family members wear them as well
- When creating or choosing a mask, experiment with **different fabric textures**

#### Ways to get used to a face mask

Use a "**visual timer**" technique. Put a timer on and wear a mask alongside your child at home. Incrementally increase the time to allow your child to get used to the feel.



**Rewards.** Give your child a reward for practicing wearing the mask at home. For example, allow your child screen time while wearing the mask.

#### How to make a mask:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/DIY-cloth-face-covering-instructions.pdf>

Be patient! It may take days or even weeks for a child to get used to a face mask. There are people around you who could help. Ask your health care provider to get the support you need.