Patient Pearls

Helping Your Child to Feel Comfortable Wearing a Mask

Tips for Success

1. Help your child select a mask they will like and will be most comfortable wearing.

   a. Look for masks decorated with your child's favorite color, sports team, character, or a fun pattern.

   b. Make the mask more comfortable by using face mask extenders, ear savers, a headband with buttons, or a face mask with around the head tie straps. Each of these take pressure away from the back of the ears.

   c. Please note: Gaiters used to be recommended as a comfortable alternative mask for kids. However, new research says that gaiters as masks may not be effective to help stop disease spread.

2. Prepare your child for wearing a mask

   a. Start practicing mask wearing at least a week or so before needing to go out in a public setting or back to school.

   b. Explain to your child why it is important to wear a mask.

   c. Model for your child to show how you wear your own mask properly.

   d. Consider showing your child pictures of other people in masks.

   e. Consider using videos available on YouTube that help explain mask use to children:

   We Wear Masks - A Social Story about the Coronavirus

   Wearing a Mask - A Social Narrative for Children

   f. Sometimes modeling mask use and explaining why it is important may not be enough and children need extra practice to feel comfortable.

You can find more detailed information in URMC's toolkit for helping your child wear a mask.

3. Try out the following 3 strategies to help when your child goes into public with their mask:

   a. Set Rules: You may find it helpful to make clear rules for your child about when, where, and why they may need to wear a mask.

   b. Take Breaks: Your child may need breaks from wearing the masks. Make sure you give your child a clear way to ask for breaks if they need it.

   c. Give Rewards: Your child may need positive reinforcement for doing a good job keeping their mask on. Consider setting a reward prior to an outing or bringing along something they may earn.

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