



How do I get my child to feel comfortable wearing a face mask?

The health and safety of our patients and staff are important to us. This handout will tell you more about teaching your child how to wear a face mask and help them get used to wearing it. This process can take some time. Each child learns at a different pace. Practice with your child when you have the time.

Teaching tips

Teach your child how to wear a mask by following the tips below:

- **Start small:** You can start by just talking about the mask or just letting your child hold the mask.
 - **Go slowly:** Give your child time to learn each step. Children all learn at different paces.
 - **Pair the learning with positives:** Make wearing a mask a positive experience. You can do this by connecting wearing a mask with something your child enjoys such as having them wear a mask while playing their favorite video game.
 - **Match your child's interest:** For example, you can say, "Your favorite super hero also wears a mask." You can show your child pictures of their favorite super hero also wearing a mask.
- Encourage your child to practice:** The more your child wears a mask, the more comfortable they will be wearing it. Practice with your child when you have the time. Talk with your care team if you continue struggle with helping your child practice.

Choosing a face mask

One way to start talking with your child about face masks is to let them have a choice. They can choose the:




- Color
- Pattern
- Shape
- Material

Some children have sensory issues or are sensitive to some kinds of clothing material. For these children, you can try turning one of their old cotton T-shirts or pants into a mask.

Steps to getting your child comfortable wearing a face mask




The steps below can help your child get used to wearing a face mask. Please take as much time with each step as your child needs.

Make sure that you only move to the next step when your child feels comfortable. Only move on to the next step when your child can easily and willingly do the step all by themselves.

		Directions
	<p>Step 1</p>	<p>Show your child how to wear mask in a playful or fun way using modeling.</p> <p>Modeling is when you have someone or something show the action that you want your child to learn. You can use a stuffed animal to model wearing your child's mask. You can also ask friends and family members to also help model wearing a mask.</p>
	<p>Step 2</p>	<p>Start by getting your child comfortable through touching. You can model touching by playing a game of touch tag with masks.</p> <p>Touch tag is a game where you can place the mask in different places and have your child touch it and/or bring it back to you.</p>
	<p>Step 3</p>	<p>Have your child hold the mask and look at it. You can start by having your child look at the mask for 5 seconds. Then, you can increase the time to 10 seconds.</p> <p>To help your child, you may also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count the seconds out loud • Model the action by holding your own mask and looking at it while you count out loud • Model the action by holding your own mask and have your child hold their own mask at the same time



Steps to getting your child comfortable wearing a face mask (continued)

Make sure that you only move to the next step when your child feels comfortable and willing to do the step all by themselves.

		Directions
	<p>Step 4</p>	<p>Have your child hold the face mask near their face. You can start by having your child hold the face mask near their face for 5 seconds. Their mask should be barely touching their face for this step. Then, you can increase the time to 10 seconds.</p> <p>To help your child, you may also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count the seconds out loud • Model the action by holding your own mask to your face while you count out loud • Model the action by holding your own mask and have your child hold their own mask to their face at the same time
	<p>Step 5</p>	<p>Have your child touch the face mask to their face. You can start by having your child touch the face mask near their face for 5 seconds. Then, you can increase the time to 10 seconds.</p> <p>To help your child, you may also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count the seconds out loud • Model the action by touching your own mask to your face while you count out loud • Model the action by touching your own mask to your face and have your child hold their own mask to their face at the same time
	<p>Step 6</p>	<p>Have your child wear the face mask. You can start by having your child wear the face mask for 5 seconds. Then, you can increase the time to 10 seconds.</p> <p>To help your child, you may also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count the seconds out loud • Model the action by putting on your own mask while you count out loud • Model the action by putting on your own mask and have your child put their mask on at the same time

Steps to getting your child comfortable wearing a face mask (continued)

Make sure that you only move to the next step when your child feels comfortable and willing to do the step all by themselves.

		Directions
	<p>Step 7</p>	<p>To get comfortable wearing the mask for a longer time, give your child something fun to do with their hands while wearing it. This way, it is less likely for them to pull at their face mask.</p> <p>We recommend that you give your child a special activity that they really, really like. This activity should take some time to do. You should also stop the activity if your child takes their mask off, or when you want to end the practice time. If they request the special activity, encourage them to put back on the mask or try again later.</p> <p>You can start by having your child wearing the mask for 5 seconds. Then, you can increase the time to 10 seconds. After that, you can slowly increase these activities to longer times.</p> <p>The goal is to have your child be comfortable wearing a face mask during the entire time they need to be out in public.</p>
	<p>Step 8</p>	<p>The next goal is to help your child get comfortable wearing the face mask even when they are doing an activity that they don't like.</p> <p>Begin by having your child wear a mask outside and doing activities that they like and don't like. Practice with activities that don't require the use of their hands like watching a movie or TV show.</p> <p>You can start by having your child wearing the mask for 5 seconds. Then, you can increase the time to 10 seconds. After that, you can slowly increase these activities to longer times.</p>

Please talk to your child's care team if your child is still experiencing a lot of trouble with wearing a mask.

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