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CDC's Redfield Suggests Masks May Offer Better Coronavirus Protection Than a Vaccine

A coronavirus vaccine could be available to the general public in 'the second or third quarter' of next year.

By **Cecelia Smith-Schoenwalder**, Staff Writer Sept. 16, 2020

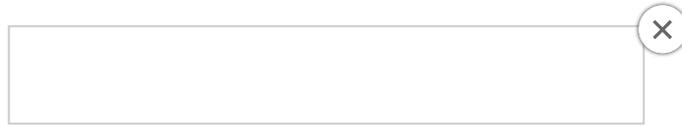


Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, testifies before a House Select Subcommittee hearing on the coronavirus in July.  ERIN SCOTT/POOL VIA AP

THE HEAD OF THE CENTERS for Disease Control and Prevention on Wednesday said that masks could be more reliable for protecting against the coronavirus than a vaccine,

which likely won't be widely available to the public until "the second or third quarter" of next year.

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"We have clear scientific evidence they work, I might even go so far as to say that this face mask is more guaranteed to protect me against COVID than when I take a COVID vaccine, because the immunogenicity may be 70 percent and if I don't get an immune response, the vaccine's not going to protect me, this face mask will," Redfield told a Senate committee.

Redfield added that masks are "the most important, powerful public health tool we have." He said that the pandemic would be brought under control if Americans embraced mask wearing for 6 to 12 weeks. He specifically called out 18 to 25 year olds who he said are responsible for continuing the outbreak in America.

Even once a vaccine is available, it will take some time before enough people are protected to create immunity, he added. Initially, the vaccine will be prioritized for first responders and those at the greatest risk of death from COVID-19.

[**MAP:** [The Spread of the Coronavirus](#)]

"I think we have to assume that if we had a vaccine, say, released today, that it's going to take us probably in the order of nine months, six to nine months to get the American public vaccinated," Redfield said.

His comments contradict President Donald Trump, who [said this week](#) that a vaccine "could be three weeks, four weeks" away.

"We're very close to having a vaccine," Trump said at a town hall hosted by ABC News on Tuesday.

Cecelia Smith-Schoenwalder, Staff Writer

Cecelia Smith-Schoenwalder writes about space, science and the environment for U.S. News & ... **READ MORE »**

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Coronavirus Bulletin

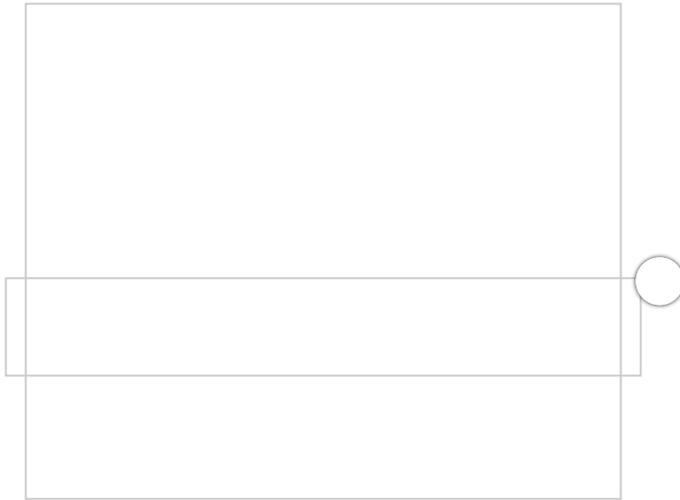
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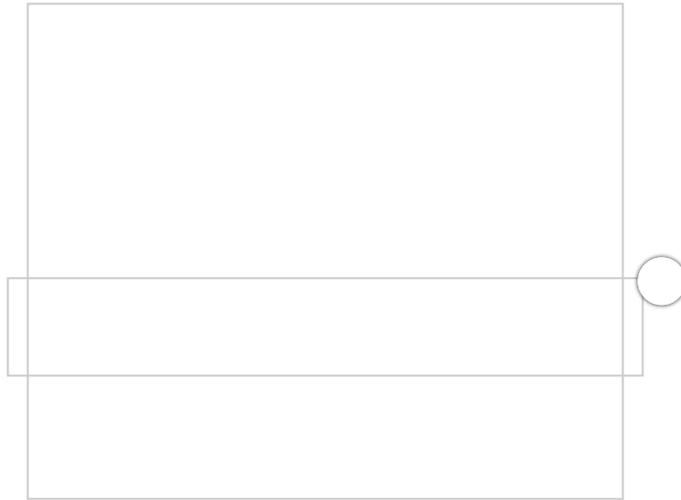
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