

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Dr. Fauci demonstrates how to wear 2 masks correctly on TODAY

Is the CDC recommending everyone wear two masks? Not exactly, but you may want to start doing so anyway.

Dr. Fauci demonstrates why 'the fit is better' if you double mask



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By Maura Hohman

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's leading infectious disease physician, broke down the exact benefits of double masking following a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that suggested two masks are better than one.

"The recommendation is not that you have to wear (two masks)," Fauci, chief medical adviser to President Joe Biden, told TODAY's Savannah Guthrie on Thursday. "What the CDC is saying (is) at minimum wear a mask."

According to Fauci, a surgical mask with a cloth mask over it provides a better fit and can minimize leakage of aerosols. Areas of the mask especially prone to leakage are below the eyes, under the jaw and in front of your ears, Fauci pointed out.

— Dr. Anthony Fauci demonstrates one of the areas where masks are prone to leakage. TODAY

"That's all (the CDC is) saying," he added. "One mask at least, but if you want to really be sure, get a tighter fit with a second mask."

Fauci, who said he's worn two masks from time to time to achieve a better fit, also recommended that if you're only wearing one mask, a "double-ply type of mask" is preferred.

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Do you need to wear two masks? Experts weigh in

Research released Wednesday from the CDC found that wearing a surgical mask underneath a cloth mask "substantially improved source control and reduced wearer exposure" to the viral particles that cause COVID-19. It marked the first time the CDC has released guidance on the most effective ways to wear masks, NBC News reported.

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To come to its conclusion in favor of two masks, researchers used "simulated breathing" experiments and found that a surgical mask by itself blocked 42% of the "most important" particles for transmitting the coronavirus; a cloth mask by itself blocked 44%.

But using a surgical mask with a cloth mask over it blocked 83% of the particles, according to the CDC, and when two people are both wearing two masks, exposure to viral particles is cut by

more than 95%.

How double masking may help protect you from mutant strains of coronavirus



Two masks can also boost protection against the COVID-19 variants spreading throughout the U.S., which may be more contagious than other strains, TODAY previously reported.

"Wearing two masks helps improve the filtration ability of the mask in both directions, so it helps protect you better and it helps protect others," Linsey Marr, professor of civil and environmental engineering at Virginia Tech, previously told TODAY.

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"You want to wear your best possible mask, which includes multiple layers, ideally some kind of filter material and a really good fit," she added.

Maura Hohman

Maura Hohman is a Brooklyn-based weekend editor and reporter for TODAY Digital who joined the team early in the coronavirus pandemic. While she happily writes about a range of topics, from pop culture to politics, she has a special interest in in-depth health coverage, especially COVID-19 research, women's health and racial health disparities.



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