

The Masking Debate Is Settled



Commentary

What is the Cochrane Library?

"The Cochrane Library contains high-quality, independent evidence to inform healthcare decision-making. It includes reliable evidence from Cochrane and other systematic reviews, clinical trials, and more. Cochrane reviews bring you the combined results of the world's best medical research studies, and are recognized as the gold standard in evidence-based health care."

[The Cochrane Library has been reviewing the use of physical interventions to interrupt or reduce the spread of respiratory viruses since 2010.](#) By physical interventions, they mean masks, shields, gowns, hand-washing, etc.

Version history

Published	Title	Stage	Authors	Version
2023 Jan 30 Show revisions	Physical interventions to interrupt or reduce the spread of respiratory viruses	Review	Tom Jefferson, Liz Dooley, Eliana Ferroni, Lubna A Al-Ansary, Mieke L Driel, Ghada A Bawazeer, Mark A Jones, Tammy C Hoffmann, Justin Clark, Elaine M Beller, Paul P Glasziou, John M Conly	https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD006207.pub6 
2020 Nov 20 Show revisions	Physical interventions to interrupt or reduce the spread of respiratory viruses	Review	Tom Jefferson, Chris B Del Mar, Liz Dooley, Eliana Ferroni, Lubna A Al-Ansary, Ghada A Bawazeer, Mieke L Driel, Mark A Jones, Sarah Thorning, Elaine M Beller, Justin Clark, Tammy C Hoffmann, Paul P Glasziou, John M Conly	https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD006207.pub5 
2011 Jul 06 Show revisions	Physical interventions to interrupt or reduce the spread of respiratory viruses	Review	Tom Jefferson, Chris B Del Mar, Liz Dooley, Eliana Ferroni, Lubna A Al-Ansary, Ghada A Bawazeer, Mieke L van Driel, N Sreekumaran Nair, Mark A Jones, Sarah Thorning, John M Conly	https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD006207.pub4 
2010 Jan 20 Show revisions	Physical interventions to interrupt or reduce the spread of respiratory viruses	Review	Tom Jefferson, Chris Del Mar, Liz Dooley, Eliana Ferroni, Lubna A Al-Ansary, Ghada A Bawazeer, Mieke L van Driel, Sreekumaran Nair, Ruth Foxlee, Alessandro Rivetti	https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD006207.pub3 
2007 Oct 17 Show revisions	Interventions for the interruption or reduction of the spread of respiratory viruses	Review	Tom Jefferson, Ruth Foxlee, Chris Del Mar, Liz Dooley, Eliana Ferroni, Bill Hewak, Adi Prabhala, Sreekumaran Nair, Alessandro Rivetti	https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD006207.pub2 
2006 Oct 18 Show revisions	Interventions for the interruption or reduction of the spread of respiratory viruses	Protocol	Tom Jefferson, Ruth Foxlee, Chris Del Mar, Liz Dooley, Eliana Ferroni, Bill Hewak, Adi Prabhala, Sreekumaran Nair	https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD006207 

This is not some short-term project, but a long-term, serious meta-analysis review. As stated above, the Cochrane reviews are considered the gold standard for healthcare agencies and professionals. When Jill and I took our fellowship training at Harvard in Global Clinical Research, the Cochrane methodology for medical research meta-analysis was taught as the preferred method.

Physical interventions to interrupt or reduce the spread of respiratory viruses

Tom Jefferson, Liz Dooley, Eliana Ferroni, Lubna A Al-Ansary, Mieke L van Driel, Ghada A Bawazeer, Mark A Jones, Tammy C Hoffmann, Justin Clark, Elaine M Beller, Paul P Glasziou, [✉](#) John M Conly
Authors' declarations of interest

Version published: 30 January 2023 [Version history](#)

<https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD006207.pub6> [↗](#)

Background

“Viral epidemics or pandemics of acute respiratory infections (ARIs) pose a global threat. Examples are influenza (H1N1) caused by the H1N1pdm09 virus in 2009, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003, and coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by SARS-CoV-2 in 2019. Antiviral drugs and vaccines may be insufficient to prevent their spread. This is an update of a Cochrane Review last published in 2020. We include results from studies from the current COVID-19 pandemic.”

Authors' conclusions

“The high risk of bias in the trials, variation in outcome measurement, and relatively low adherence with the interventions during the studies hampers drawing firm conclusions. There were additional RCTs during the pandemic related to physical interventions but a relative paucity given the importance of the

question of masking and its relative effectiveness and the concomitant measures of mask adherence which would be highly relevant to the measurement of effectiveness, especially in the elderly and in young children.

“There is uncertainty about the effects of face masks. The low to moderate certainty of evidence means our confidence in the effect estimate is limited, and that the true effect may be different from the observed estimate of the effect.

“The pooled results of RCTs did not show a clear reduction in respiratory viral infection with the use of medical/surgical masks. There were no clear differences between the use of medical/surgical masks compared with N95/P2 respirators in healthcare workers when used in routine care to reduce respiratory viral infection. Hand hygiene is likely to modestly reduce the burden of respiratory illness, and although this effect was also present when ILI and laboratory-confirmed influenza were analysed separately, it was not found to be a significant difference for the latter two outcomes. Harms associated with physical interventions were under-investigated.

“There is a need for large, well-designed RCTs addressing the effectiveness of many of these interventions in multiple settings and populations, as well as the impact of adherence on effectiveness, especially in those most at risk of ARIs.”

This large group of international researchers reviewed dozens of rigorously correct, randomized clinical trials of “physical interventions” against respiratory diseases. These diseases

included influenza and COVID-19 during the pandemic, and these researchers failed to find even a “modest effect” on infection or illness rates from any type of mask.

Furthermore, the effects that masking is having on health, childhood development, speech development, etc. are unknown and are under-investigated. Ergo—governments aren’t funding this research. Without government funding, the answer to the damage done will never be answered.

* * *

So, here we are in 2023. Why does this matter? Mask mandates are gone, right?

You think this is over?

Not for our children and grandchildren. The damage done is ongoing and real.

In blue states, such as New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Washington, and California, masks in schools [are still often required](#).

Just look at recent headlines:

More US schools institute mask mandates as COVID cases rise

Weekly COVID-19 cases have risen over the last five weeks.

By [Mary Kekatos](#)

January 9, 2023, 1:24 PM



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Kristen Jordan Shamus

Detroit Free Press

Published 6:05 a.m. ET Jan. 10, 2023 | Updated 7:57 a.m. ET Jan. 10, 2023

Daily Mail

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By Caitlin Tilley, Health Reporter For Dailymail.Com
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Masks make comeback in US



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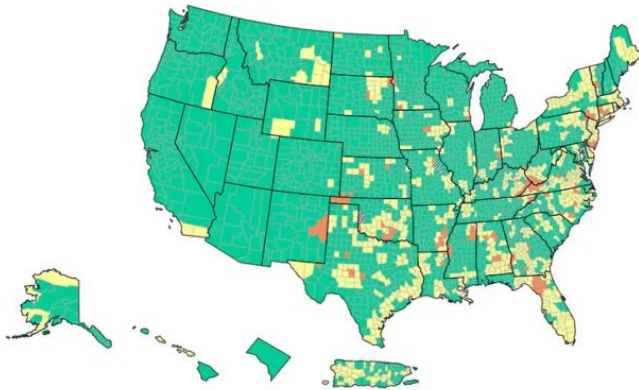


Jan 20, 2023 12:00 AM



The CDC is still [recommends masking in areas with "high" transmission levels](#) and also recommends indoor masking to

protect high-risk contacts in “medium” counties. Currently, that means 27 percent of all counties in the USA.



COVID-19 Community Levels in US by County

	Total	Percent	% Change
High	118	3.67%	- 2.42%
Medium	864	26.86%	- 4.52%
Low	2235	69.47%	6.94%

[How are COVID-19 Community Levels calculated?](#)

Scientism has replaced science.

* * *

Luckily, more and more Americans aren't drinking the Kool-Aid. Only 15.5 percent of Americans have received the [bivalent recent booster](#).

The CDC has now removed the category of 6 months to under five on its vaccine tracker page, but the data can be found on a deep dive. It appears to be about 8 percent vaccinated for this age cohort.

The message is getting out.

We must keep fighting for our children and our health.

Now it is time to get rid of the mask mandates, and the ability of the CDC to mandate products or massive quarantines ever again. It is

time to regain personal freedoms lost.

Originally published on the author's [Substack](#), reposted from the [Brownstone Institute](#)

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.