

## WEARING A MASK

In accordance with City of Calgary bylaws, Infinity Pediatrics requires all parents and children over the age of 2 to mask continuously within our clinic.

Masks help decrease the spread of COVID-19 in two ways. First, if you are unknowingly carrying the virus, you help protect the families we care for by limiting the spread of your droplets. Second, wearing a mask reduces the chance of breathing in infected droplets from those around you.

- Choosing a mask (Dr. Deena Hinshaw):  
[https://youtu.be/J\\_hds5pOdyU](https://youtu.be/J_hds5pOdyU)
- How to wear a mask (Dr. Deena Hinshaw):  
<https://youtu.be/6MojzHFStNs>
- Pictorial (Sick Kids):  
[http://www.sickkids.ca/VisitingSickKids/Staying-at-SickKids/81068-1275.How%20to%20wear%20a%20mask%20REV%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.sickkids.ca/VisitingSickKids/Staying-at-SickKids/81068-1275.How%20to%20wear%20a%20mask%20REV%20(1).pdf)

Inappropriate medical exemptions have the potential to inadvertently quicken the spread of COVID-19 in our community. However, there are exceptional circumstances which do warrant consideration of a mask exemption. These include:

- Children less than 2 years
- Children with autism spectrum disorder, global developmental delay, or intellectual disability who are unable to wear a mask
- Children with severe neuromuscular disease

\*as per City of Calgary guidelines you do NOT need a letter from a physician

The following are NOT medical conditions requiring an exemption:

- Asthma or other chronic lung disease
- Congenital cardiac disease
- Anxiety
- Acne or dermatitis
- Discomfort with wearing a mask

We understand some medical conditions and personal circumstances make masking seem too difficult. The following are expert and evidence-based suggestions to make it possible for you to protect yourself and others.

• **Asthma:** The Canadian Thoracic Society has stated that "there is no evidence that wearing a face mask will exacerbate (cause a 'flare up' of) an underlying lung condition." <https://cts-sct.ca/covid-19/use-of-face-masks-by-the-public/>

• **Anxiety:** Like all unfamiliar experiences, masking can require some conditioning. Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jessicagold/2020/07/01/feeling-anxious-about-wearing-a-mask-here-are-5-ways-to-overcome-it/#1ee29c014629>



- **Autism:** Sometimes a story can help them to understand.  
<https://www.autismlittlelearners.com/search/label/COVID-19?m=1>
- **Young children:** The American Academy of Pediatrics also has some suggestions: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Cloth-FaceCoverings-for-Children-During-COVID-19.aspx>

Here at Infinity, our doctors have some suggestions for getting your young one to wear a mask.

- **Role model:** Start by letting them see you wear a mask, or maybe older sibling or a favourite uncle. Show them pictures or videos of other children wearing masks. When it is familiar, it becomes more acceptable.
- **Make it fun:** Try putting the masks on stuffed animals. Play dress up with masks and capes in the mirror like a super hero. Draw pictures of yourselves wearing masks. Make silly faces behind the mask and have them guess what you are doing. Let them decorate disposable masks, or let them pick a pattern on home made ones. Wear matching ones for fun!
- **Distract them:** Read a book while wearing it. Play a game of hide and seek in them. Let them wear it on an outing to the playground. Wear it inside when doing chores. Take every opportunity to try it so it normalizes mask-wearing.
- **Nothing negative:** Don't get upset if they won't wear it. Just acknowledge and comfort them, and try again another time. Avoid overwhelming them with a long mask time. Try increasing by just 5 minute increments, then showering them with praise for their success. Sticker charts and rewards may also help.
- **Talk about it:** If your little one can understand, you can provide simple explanations, such as "Masks help to keep everyone healthy" or "There are germs we want to keep away from our mouth and nose!"

Practice makes perfect. Thank you for helping us protect our families and yours!

Sincerely,

The Pediatricians of Infinity Pediatrics

