



ACP Policy Statement on Masks/Respirators

Approved by the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents on behalf of the Board of Regents on March 7, 2022

The use of masks or respirators is part of a comprehensive SARS-CoV2 prevention strategy. The decision to use high-quality masks or respirators by an individual in community settings should be informed by consideration of multiple variables. These include: an individual's vaccination status and community vaccination rates, an individual's preferences and personal/family risk (e.g., immunocompetent or immunocompromised), epidemiologic data (e.g., SARS-CoV-2 variant and transmission rates, hospitalizations, and deaths), and exposure context (e.g., number of people, indoor vs outdoors, ventilation, job-related risk). The type of mask or respirator has an impact on the degree of protection. Well-fitted respirators, such as N95s, offer the highest level of protection.

A comprehensive SARS-CoV-2 prevention strategy by public health officials should also incorporate promotion of preventive hygiene protocols (e.g., hand washing), vaccine uptake, widespread access to diagnostic testing, and public education about correct use of masks and respirators (e.g., selection, fit, safe use, disposal).