

Figure 1

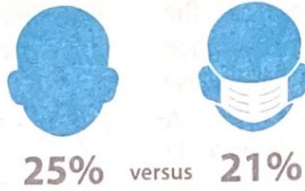
MASKS FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Based on evidence from randomized controlled trials

If I wear a surgical mask while out in public, will it protect me from flu-like illness?



2 trials
1683 people



But no
difference in
lab-confirmed
influenza

The reduction in flu-like illness may be
4% (range: 0-8%) over 6 weeks.

What about wearing a surgical mask at home after a household member becomes sick?

**Sick person
wears mask**
2 trials, 903 people



**Healthy household
members wear masks**
1 trial, 290 people



**Healthy and sick people
wear masks**
4 trials, 2750 people



In all three scenarios, wearing a mask did NOT reduce the risk
of getting flu-like illness or confirmed influenza.

Masks are only one part of preventing infection.

(for example: physical distancing, hand washing)

Can we trust these results?
Some of the limitations include:

- Masks not worn consistently in studies.
- For household studies, people already sick before starting to wear masks.
- Too few people got sick to show a difference in outcomes.
- Definition of flu-like illness inconsistent between trials.

What we do not know yet:

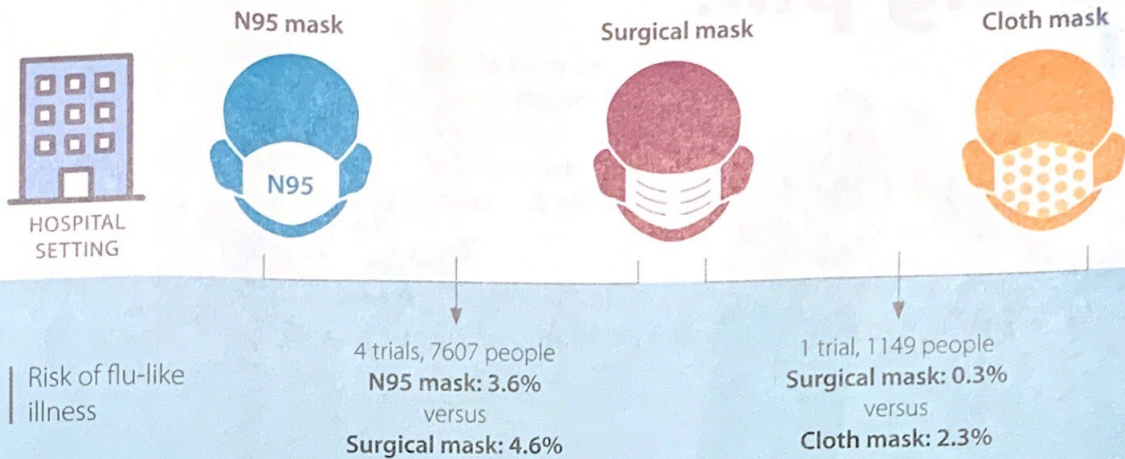
- Do cloth masks work in the community?
- Will use of masks in public prevent others from getting sick?
- Will masks prevent COVID-19 infections?

Figure 2

MASKS FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Based on evidence from randomized controlled trials

For healthcare workers, is there a difference between masks in protecting against flu-like illness?



If there is a difference between groups, it may be about 1% (range: 0-2%) over 4-12 weeks.
No difference in lab-confirmed influenza or lab-confirmed viral respiratory infections.

The difference in flu-like illness may be 2% over 4 weeks (range: 0-2.3%).

Masks are only one part of preventing infection. Additional personal protective equipment and precautions should be used based on the clinical setting.

Can we trust these results?
Some of the limitations include:

- Masks not worn consistently in studies.
- Too few people got sick to show a difference in outcomes.
- Definition of flu-like illness inconsistent between trials.
- Infection spread outside of work setting may impact studies.
- Interpretation of results sensitive to the statistics used.

What we do not know yet:

- There is no research in primary care.
- This research does not identify high-risk procedures requiring modification of mask use.
- There is no research yet in COVID-19.