How superheroes wear masks



Superheroes don’t wear masks just over their eyes when they fight germs.

Every child, long before COVID, was taught to prevent germs from entering their bodies by washing their hands and making sure their nose did not get too close to other kids’ noses. As we’ve always said, “You don’t want someone’s boogers to jump into your nose.” Besides distancing, wearing a mask is just another way to prevent those boogers from jumping in or out of noses. But most people are unfamiliar with wearing masks and are not sure how to teach their kids to wear them.

Enter superheroes. As we know, superheroes wear masks. Above is a photo of one of Dr. Lai’s favorite superheroes, along

side other mask-wearing superheroes. Her superhero sister is an ER doctor. She wears layers to keep herself from bringing home COVID to her own kids. She works in this garb for hours and hours. We borrow from her hints for helping your kids do the same with their masks:

- **Cover both your child's nose and mouth with the mask**. The path for a germ to enter and exit the lungs is through BOTH the mouth and nose…it's all connected. If the mask has a wire at the top part of the mask, pinch it over your child's nose and press gently over the tops of their cheeks. This helps prevent glasses from fogging and also limits germs from coming and going through leaky areas of the mask.
- **Have your child talk, sing, and jump up and down in their mask before leaving the house.** We have seen many a mask wiggle down a kid's (or parent's) face as they start to talk. It's like watching a game of chutes and ladder…the mask goes up a little, and down and little, and sometimes it slides right off.
- **If the mask seems too big, try tying the loop with a small knot.** The secret is to fold the mask in half (lengthwise) with the outsides facing each other and tie a knot close to where the strings meet the paper/fabric. Then pop it back open and tuck the corners in. This works best with a paper mask. Note, masks are not recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics for those under two years old. Check out other kids who should not wear masks here.
- **Some kids will complain about the mask**. It can be a comfort issue, a fashion issue, or a habit issue. They are just not accustomed to wearing a mask and over time they will get used to it. If comfort were the only goal of kid fashion, gel light-up princess shoes would not exist! Practice having all of your family members wear a mask around the house before venturing out. Also, try your child's mask on yourself. Maybe the material really

is “stinky” or “pinchy” and it’s time for a different mask.

- **Once a mask is on, teach kids to pull up a mask from the sides or near their cheeks, not near their nose.** Again, you want them to avoid touching their boogers.
- **Taking off a mask correctly is as important as putting one on.** When taking off a mask have them wash their hands with soap and water and then gently take their mask off at the ears. If their hands are not washed and they touch their mask around their nose, there is the potential for germy droplets on their hands to jump into their nose.
- **If you find that ear loops are chafing your child behind the ears or over the cheeks,** moisturize an hour before wearing. If you moisturize right before putting on the mask, there is the risk that the mask will slide around. There are all sorts of methods to hook the loops to places other than behind the ears. You can sew buttons on a headband and secure the loops to the buttons or secure the loops to glasses. There are also mask extenders available. Use non-comedogenic (non-acne-producing) lotions such as Cervave®, Cetaphil®, or moisturizers meant for faces only.
- **If cloth, wash the mask in soap and water when they get home.** There is no need to torch the mask with high heat or douse in a special chemical. A good wash with soap and air drying for a day will kill off germs- COVID and other germs as well.
- **Paper masks need to breathe.** Most are technically one time use, but let’s get real, we know that you will use them more than once. Store them in paper lunch bags-fold the masks so the outside (germy side) is touching together.
- **One final tip: COMPLIMENT your child’s proper mask wearing!** Dr. Kardos is often overheard exclaiming to her patients: “I LOVE your mask! It is so COOL! Do you like MINE? See how I wear it LIKE A SUPERHERO?” It is fun to

watch the kids immediately put on their masks if they were initially off, and to pull it up over their noses correctly to mirror Dr. Kardos if they had been wearing the mask improperly.

What better barrier against nose spew than wearing a mask? Have your kids wear them in superhero style. Until this pandemic is under control, mask wearing will play a huge role in keeping your children safer from disease spread.

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