

Mask use during Athletic Participation

- There is overwhelming evidence that inhalation of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) represents a major transmission route for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).¹
- Current evidence for the effectiveness of mask use at reducing transmission of COVID-19 is strongly recommended by all major medical governing bodies.
- The World Health Organization has advised against mask use while exercising, stating: *FACT: People should NOT wear masks when exercising, as masks may reduce the ability to breathe comfortably. Sweat can make the mask become wet more quickly which makes it difficult to breathe and promotes the growth of microorganisms. The important preventive measure during exercise is to maintain physical distance of at least one meter from others.*²
- Exercising with facemasks might increase pathophysiological risks of underlying chronic disease, especially cardiovascular and metabolic risks.³
- Mandatory mask use during sport participation has not been encouraged by any Canadian health authority or by the Sport Medicine Advisory Committee of Canada at present time.⁴
- Scientific evidence for impact of mask wearing on exercise capacity while participating in sport has been debated.^{5,6}
- Research suggests that masks may only be effective at low to moderate levels of exercise.⁷
- For a mask to optimize the reduction in transmission risk there are several key considerations to make including mask type and coinciding hand sanitation procedures.⁸

References:

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3. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7306735/>
4. <https://csiontario.ca/news/categories/covid-19>
5. Fikenzler, Sven & Uhe, Tobias & Lavall, D. & Rudolph, U. & Falz, Roberto & Busse, Martin & Hepp, Pierre & Laufs, U.. (2020). Effects of surgical and FFP2/N95 face masks on cardiopulmonary exercise capacity. *Clinical Research in Cardiology*. 10.1007/s00392-020-01704-y.
6. Kampert, Matthew & Singh, Tamanna & Finet, J. & Van Iterson, Erik. (2020). Impact of wearing a facial covering on aerobic exercise capacity in the COVID-19 era: is it more than a feeling?. *Clinical Research in Cardiology*. 10.1007/s00392-020-01725-7.
7. <https://www.atsjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1513/AnnalsATS.202005-569RL>
8. DeBrouwer, Christophe. (2020). Wearing a Mask, a Universal Solution Against COVID-19 or an Additional Health Risk?. 10.13140/RG.2.2.32273.66403.