



# Breathe Safe, Stay Well:

## Mask up to protect yourself and your community.

### Wildfire smoke

releases fine particles into the air that are unhealthy for anyone to breathe—and it's worse for children, who are considered a high-risk group.

(Health Canada, 2021)



**Health Canada** recommends wearing an N95 mask to protect yourself from wildfire smoke.

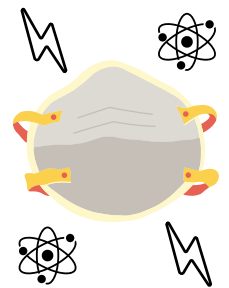
**Respiratory viruses** like influenza, RSV, and COVID-19 are airborne, meaning they float and travel in the air like smoke.

(Wang et al., 2021)

For the best protection, the **Ontario Society of Professional Engineers** recommends wearing an N95 respirator or equivalent when indoors or in crowded outdoor spaces if infected people may be present. **Remember:** People can be contagious without symptoms! Protect yourself and others.

**N95 respirator masks** use electrically charged fibres and many layers to attract and trap microscopic particles—so you don't breathe them in.

(Allain, 2022)



Research shows that masking in schools works. Two school districts in the greater Boston area that retained masking requirements after their local mandates ended had **fewer cases of COVID-19 among students and staff** over the next 15 weeks compared to the ones that lifted masking requirements.

(Cowger et al., 2022)



# Choose the Best Mask: Three Fs

## Filtration

N95 and KN95 masks use material that can filter at least 95% of the hardest to capture particles. Surgical/procedure and cloth masks are not specifically designed to filter airborne particles.

## Fit

Try different types and sizes of masks to find the right fit for you. The best mask achieves a tight seal without any leaks. Head straps usually provide a tighter fit and better seal than ear loop straps.

## Function

Ultimately, the best mask is the one you can comfortably wear while performing daily activities. Kids should have masks they can wear consistently and put on and take off themselves.

## Which type of mask is best?

Most Effective



### N95 respirator

- Material has 95%+ filtration efficiency
- Look for NIOSH certification
- Head straps



### KN95

- Material has 95%+ filtration efficiency
- NIOSH does not certify masks with ear loop straps



### Surgical/procedure

- Designed for fluids not airborne protection
- Ear loop straps



### Cloth

- Unregulated
- Various fits and materials

Least Effective



Ontario School Safety is committed to advocating for clean, comfortable, and safe air in schools and on school buses in Ontario. Masks are one way to clean the air we breathe.

To learn more, visit [www.ontarioschoolsafety.com](http://www.ontarioschoolsafety.com).



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