

Kids and masks: how and which to wear

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“It is appropriate that kids of two and above wear a mask that cover, like adults, their nose and mouth, when they are in an environment at risk of contamination (community environment, especially in areas at higher diffusion) or when they are already showing the disease or are at risk of spreading the infection.”

So, **pediatrics of the Bambino Gesù children’s hospital in Rome** explain in [an article](#) about the new coronavirus how to manage at best the difficult relationship between kids and masks. Specifying who has to wear them and who doesn’t and how to make them more familiar for kids.

WHO SHOULDN’T WEAR MASKS.

“The use of masks is not recommended in kids under two years of age,” clarify experts. Moreover it is **to avoid the use of the mask for everyone has difficulties in breathing** (for example during an asthma attack) or does not respond actively to stimuli (unconscious), **or who is unable to remove the mask by themselves**, as in the case of some kids or disabled children.”

In these younger children and in other situations described is therefore very important to observe the **general rules for prevention**.

TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF THE MASK IN CHILDREN

In older, school-aged children, it is advisable to focus on imitation and praise them for correct behaviour.

It is therefore very helpful to **show how to wear** the mask correctly and ask them to repeat the action of both putting on and taking off the mask.

At this point it is good to praise them for how they followed the instructions and give a few more tips to make it safer to use the mask.

For **younger children**, help, play and a good example are essential.

It can be the parent himself or herself who places the mask on the child's face, making sure it is properly fitted to the face.

Create games or fairy tales that explain the usefulness of the mask (**here the dedicated episode of “Fortunello” in the News**) and remind the children every day, through good example and repetition of gestures that become familiar, to respect all the useful rules to prevent the spread of the virus, such as **hand washing**, keeping the **safety distance and wearing the mask before leaving home**.

WHAT KIND OF MASKS?

On the market there are various types of masks for children, not necessarily medical devices, but equally useful “in the main function of retaining droplets in the case of an infected subject, or potentially so”, explain pediatricians.

They can be found in chemists or in some stores specialized in children's items or online with prices ranging from 1 to 30 euros, depending on the characteristics.

Many of them are washable and, therefore, reusable.

The Lombardy Region also considers **the use of scarves** sufficient (**or, in the case of children, the mid-season neck warmers in cotton, which are more comfortable**) as long as they cover the nose and mouth.

For older children, **from 8-9 years old and up, it is also possible to try to adapt masks for adults**, by shortening the elastic bands that hook behind the ears.

Opening photo by **Manuel Darío Fuentes Hernández** from **Pixabay**.

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