

Face protection effective in preventing the spread of influenza: study

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A new article in the journal *Risk Analysis* assessed various ways in which aerosol transmission of the flu, a central mode of diffusion which involves breathing droplets in the air, can be reduced. Results show that face protection is a key infection control measure for influenza and can thus affect how people should try to protect themselves from the swine flu.

Lawrence M. Wein, Ph.D., and Michael P. Atkinson of Stanford University constructed a mathematical model of [aerosol](#) transmission of the flu to explore infection control measures in the home.

Their model predicted that the use of face protection including N95 respirators (these fit tight around the face and are often worn by construction workers) and surgical masks (these fit looser around the face and are often worn by dental hygienists) are effective in preventing the flu. The filters in surgical masks keep out 98 percent of the virus. Also, only 30 percent of the benefits of the respirators and masks are achieved if they are used only after an infected person develops symptoms.

"Our research aids in the understanding of the efficacy of [infection control](#) measures for [influenza](#), and provides a framework about the routes of transmission," the authors conclude.

This timely article has the potential to impact current efforts and recommendations to control the so-called swine [flu](#) by international,

national and local governments in perspective.

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

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