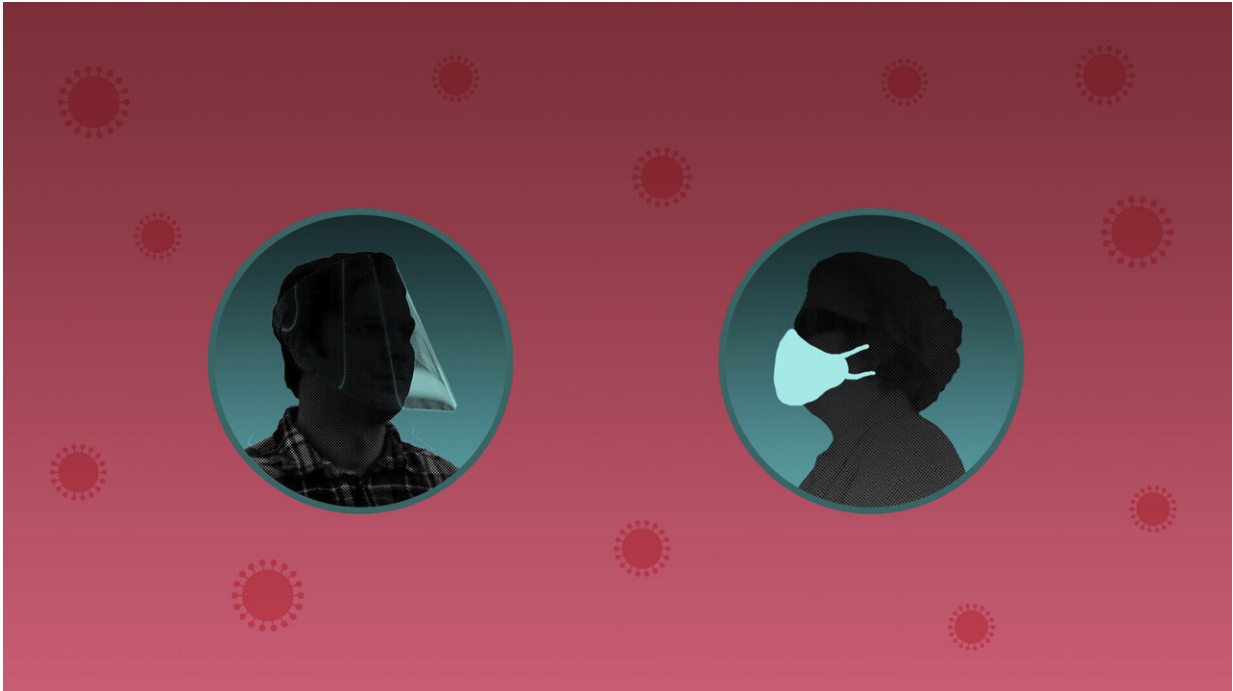


Can I use a face shield instead of a mask?

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AP Illustration/Peter Hamlin

Can I use a face shield instead of a mask?

No. Health officials don't recommend the clear plastic barriers as a substitute for masks because of the lack of research on whether they keep an infected person from spreading viral droplets to others.

However, those who want extra protection may want to wear a [face](#)

[shield](#) in addition to a mask.

Face shields have the added benefit of protecting your eyes and discouraging you from touching your face by acting as a [physical barrier](#), says Christopher Sulmonte, project administrator of the biocontainment unit at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Meanwhile, the available research so far indicates that the best face shields for preventing viral spread are hooded or wrap around the sides and bottom of the face, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's because those shields leave less space for droplets from sneezing, coughing and talking to escape.

If you do wear a reusable face [shield](#) in addition to a mask, the CDC notes the importance of cleaning it after each use. The agency also says you should wash your hands before and after taking it off, and avoid touching your face while removing it.

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