The Uncertainty of Mask Wearing

In 2020 when the Coronavirus pandemic began, I was in a panic. I have two children both in school, my fiancé and I both working full-time. I was laid off my children then went to virtual learning, but my fiancé remained working full-time. These uncertain times had many people clueless on what to do. There was very little research and hardly any information, the basic guidelines were to keep a mask on and stay home away from others except for necessities. Now over a year later we do have more information yet we as a country are still very uncertain.

In America there have now been two times when masks have been mandated to protect society. As of now masks have become an issue of debate within the last year, with the notable Coronavirus. Before the Coronavirus there was The Spanish Flu. This pandemic began in January 1918 and claimed the lives of over 50 million people by the time it ended in December 1920; masks were very prevalent during these times. According to sources through [CNN](file:///C:\Users\dahuf\AppData\Local\Temp\In%20the%201918%20flu%20pandemic,%20not%20wearing%20a%20mask%20was%20illegal%20in%20some%20parts%20of%20America.%20What%20changed%3f%20-%20CNN) on October 24, 1918, San Fransisco began the first mask mandate in the United States. After they had begun the mask mandate anyone that was seen outside without a mask could be fined or imprisoned. Trains coming into cities would be met with women that had masks for the travelers in case they were not able to obtain one elsewhere. Masks were heavily implemented throughout the country for everybody’s health.

Mask mandates have come to a head during current times due to the Coronavirus or Covid-19. This virus was first identified in 2019 and is still an ongoing issue. This virus is spread through droplets, which would require mouth covering to keep them from spreading. Sources from [John Hopkins](file:///C:\Users\dahuf\AppData\Local\Temp\What%20Is%20Coronavirus%3f%20|%20Johns%20Hopkins%20Medicine) state, when infected with Covid-19 you may not portray symptoms immediately or you may be asymptomatic. This could cause others to contract the virus without your knowledge of you being a carrier. The spread of Coronavirus is very easily spread with sources from the [Health Lab of Michigan](https://labblog.uofmhealth.org/lab-report/how-quickly-does-coronavirus-spread) state for every one person that is infected, they will personally infect another 2-3 more people. With the infection rate continuing to grow the use of masks would be mandatory. The long-term effects of this virus are still unknown as they are still making new discoveries daily, but we are certain that it does cause health issues leading up to death.

With Covid-19 being easily transmittable mask mandates were put into effect across the United States, with New Jersey being the first of the 50 states to order a mask mandate on April 8th, 2020. Many states followed suit shortly after. All states at this point made their own decisions on when masks were mandatory, or when to lift the mandate. According to CDC Guidelines as of March 8th 2021 anyone that has been fully vaccinated can shed their masks as stated in [The Los Angeles Times](https://www.latimes.com/science/story/2021-07-27/timeline-cdc-mask-guidance-during-covid-19-pandemic). This only applied to people that were fully vaccinated. The CDC then states if you are not vaccinated you are still to wear your face covering in all indoor settings and most outdoor settings. As of July 27th, 2021, the CDC recommends anyone that is fully vaccinated or unvaccinated to wear there facial covering as there is a new variant of Coronavirus called the Delta Variant. This would require some who have already been vaccinated to get booster shots.

With masks being a central issue for millions of people, you always have people on opposing ends of the spectrum. Some Americans think wearing masks will help save society while others feel it is detrimental to one’s health or that it could even be politically fueled.

Maureen Downey argues in “Opinion: As a mother of young children, I beg Cobb County mandate masks.” She argues that masks in the school system are needed and should not just be recommended. In this article it is strongly stated that many Americans do not have the funds to deal with the repercussions the virus would hold for their families, especially families of color. The author of this article is very invested in this emotionally as her kids’ health is at stake. This is where she connects with the reader; with quotes like “Our children are too important, their lives too full of promise, to continue in the way we are going.” Her claims on health are very strong and supported by credible sources, but I do not feel that is the basis of this article. I do feel as though this is more of an emotionally charged article as she fears for the safety of her children; and the community.

The article does show the rise of the cases since the masks have been made optional, but she does not show if these numbers stay at this increased number or if they fluctuate. This information is crucial to allow the reader to see how devastating this virus can be at one time, but this article does not make the correlation with ongoing cases. This article is a very biased view of a mask mandate with the opinion of a mother to be treated as fact.

From a scientific approach you have an article from Lynne Peeples tilted “What science says about lifting mask mandates.” The fluctuation of masks and vaccinations all vary on demographics. As shown in Germany getting a jump on the mask mandate put a 75% drop in the Covid cases in just 20 days, while other areas lagged behind. When areas are lifting the mask mandates, as many are getting vaccinated, many are still choosing not to get vaccinated.

This article appeals to the academic mind as it states many facts with credible sources; this also covers many crucial topics all backed by research. The tone of this article is also very monotone, which helps not create a bias. I’ve also noticed with this article that they do state information on both sides of wearing a mask. Many facts with many credible sources were used. One example with a credible source was used with the estimation of the deaths that could have been prevented by a mask mandate. Many people still do not know what to do as shown in this article. With mandates being lifted some stores are still implementing the mask mandate to ensure safety, even if it does cause loss of business.

This article also uses comparative arguments when comparing to the AIDS/HIV epidemic with the Covid epidemic. They also use studies and a comparative argument on which masks are the most protective, and if cloth masks even protect you. Lynne Peeples is just trying to show in these times there is uncertainty and people should err on the side of caution.

Tucker Carlson’s article titled “New mask guidelines are about politics and control” states how the new Biden administration is detrimental to our bodies. In this statement he is trying to relate to the reader with a scare tactic that your health is at risk. Carlson then moves onto state in his article that the Biden administration has determined they will not be making masks mandatory or vaccines mandatory, but Joe Biden (the president) states he would do whatever it takes to encourage people to do the right thing. Now, at this point Biden is making all government employees get vaccinated, and masks are still mandatory in some locations. Carlson is now implementing more information this is backed with a credible source, but all the credible sources are all written by Fox News which is the leading platform of which this article was posted. What is being claimed is the Biden administration used Covid as a scare tactic to get elected into office, using the vaccinated against the unvaccinated. The article states that the representatives are not backing the people to not force vaccinations. As previously Americans were not forced to receive vaccinations they did not want, so why this one? This is a way to make the reader feel they are having no control over what is going on, and the government has full control. The claim he is making is that it is politically fueled. With little evidence, this article does have strong claims but nothing to implement them. This article comes with very few supporting statements as most of the article is opinion. With all the claims being supported by Fox News.

The purpose of a mask mandate could still lie unclear for many. All three previous arguments did have valid arguments, but were they strong and credible? In my opinion I weigh in the middle ground of mandating masks, with my answer not being so clear. I think this is where most people stand. I personally do believe that there is a time and place when masks are needed, yet we shouldn’t wear them at all times.

As shown in the first arguments by Maureen Downey there are many children that are contracting the virus once mask mandates are lifted. These children are not able to receive the vaccines. You then have the article by Tucker Carlson which states wearing masks is hurting our health “millions of children will be required to cover their faces- this despite the scientifically established fact that masks pose a greater risk than Covid, both arguments are very crucial. What do we do if our kids are getting sick because they aren’t wearing masks? On the opposing end if we are wearing the masks are they going to make us sick too, which one is worse?

The article by Lynne Peeples shows the confusion caused by mask mandates, vaccines and ultimately the Corona Virus. Many people are scared and don’t know what to do especially when it comes to their health. You would think the most obvious answer would be to wear a mask, but when you have research showing that breathing in your own air all day is not good for you, what do you do? The purpose of a mask mandate is to keep yourself and the people around you healthy and to stop the spread of contractable virus, but if only some people are wearing them and you only wear them on certain occasions, does it really apply? In my opinion the research is readily available to everyone, I feel that like Tucker Carlson stated people should be able to make the choice on what they want to do with their bodies. If you would like to wear a mask, wear it. If you want the vaccine, get it, but I do not feel that anything should be forced upon the people that have the right to choose.

There are many emotional and politically charged articles that depict if masks should be mandatory but, the purpose of them still remains. Most people comprehend the purpose of the mask but, do they understand that the mask is not just to protect them? The mask is to protect others, the people that are immunocompromised, children that don’t understand to keep their masks on, and people that are more susceptible to contracting the virus. Like I previously stated, there is a time and place to wear a mask. Our bodies need fresh air like Tucker Carlson stated we should not be wearing masks; I agree with this statement. People were not made to always have face coverings on, we need fresh air, so the less we wear masks the better. On the other hand, we do need to respect the fact that other people need our help. We need the human race to stick together for the future of the world.

In my opinion I recommend keeping your immune system up with taking the vitamins needed. I also recommend wearing a mask in public places such as schools, grocery stores, movie theaters etc. With that being said these people need to have frequent breaks from their masks to be able to breathe fresh air. As previously stated, this was how the flu of 1918 was able to subside, with it having multiple waves, and able to help prevent many more deaths. So, do I think they should be mandatory? Yes, with respect to the human body.

French, Paul. “In the 1918 Flu Pandemic, Not Wearing a Mask Was Illegal in Some Parts of America. What Changed?” *CNN*, Cable News Network, 5 Apr. 2020, www.cnn.com/2020/04/03/americas/flu-america-1918-masks-intl-hnk/index.html.

Netburn, Deborah. “A Timeline of the CDC's Advice on Face Masks.” *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles Times, 27 July 2021, www.latimes.com/science/story/2021-07-27/timeline-cdc-mask-guidance-during-covid-19-pandemic.

“What Is Coronavirus?” *Johns Hopkins Medicine*, www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus.

Peeples, L. (2021). What the science says about lifting mask mandates. *Nature*, *593*(7860), 495–498. https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-01394-0

‌ Carlson, T. (2021, July 27). *Tucker Carlson: New mask guidelines are about politics and control*. Fox News. https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/tucker-carlson-new-mask-guidelines-politics-control

‌ *Opinion: As mother of young children, I beg Cobb to mandate masks*. (n.d.). Ajc. Retrieved October 8, 2021, from https://www.ajc.com/education/get-schooled-blog/opinion-as-mother-of-young-children-i-beg-cobb-to-mandate-masks/YY2CZ3HHXFDT3OPMANYEN57WCQ/

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Portion** | **Ideal Criteria** | **Overall Feedback** |
| Introduction | * Engaging * Shows importance of question * Indicates major parts and content |  |
| Background | * Uses credible, neutral sources * Effectively and sufficiently explains essential information * Written objectively in own words * Well organized and focused paragraphs with transitions * Minimal error |  |
| Analysis | * Smooth transition from background * Summarizes accurately and in own words two opposing answers and one objective answer to the question * Recognizes bias * Reasonable observations about how all sources make their arguments impactful * Well-organized and focused paragraphs with transitions * Minimal error |  |
| Response | * Smooth transition from analysis * Incorporates strong points from sources * Draws a reasonable and well-supported conclusion, answering the question * Provides satisfying conclusion to the project * Good transitions between focused paragraphs * Minimal error |  |