

Masks for Kids – Fall 2021

For much of the pandemic and especially for children, cloth masks have been the cornerstone of masking for non-healthcare workers. However, we no longer have shortages of high-filtration masks, like N95, KN95, or KF94 masks. These masks are much more effective than cloth masks at protecting the wearer from exposure (in addition to preventing them from exposing others). ***With the delta variant being much more contagious, more effective masks will be necessary to prevent transmission within classrooms.***



There are two components that determine the effectiveness of a mask: material and fit.



Material: Effective mask materials are certified to provide a barrier not only against large droplets, but also prevent the emission and inhalation of small droplets. More effective filtration can be found in N95, KN95, and KF94 masks. Regular cloth masks, even with multiple layers of fabric, do not provide the same level of protection against small droplets, which can transmit SARS-CoV-2.

Fit: A good fit is critical to ensuring that air passes *through* the high-filtration material and not around it. A well-fit mask should fit snugly over the nose. There should not be any gaps on the side of the face and the mask should extend down over the chin.

Disposable mask recommendations

While disposable masks are intended for single use, they can be safely reused several times if in good condition. After a mask has been used, place it in a paper bag and let sit for 3-4 days. The mask should then be safe to reuse. If the mask is visibly soiled or no longer fits well, discard. Depending on the daily activities of your child and duration of wear, you may only be able to reuse the mask 2-3 times.

KF94 masks from [BeHealthyUSA](https://www.behealthyusa.com)

They sell four brands of KF94 masks for kids.

Blue



BLUNA



BOTN



POSH



All four of these masks are certified by Korean regulators to meet filtration requirements. Which mask type to select is just a matter of which ones fit your child's face best. You can generally purchase masks for \$1-\$2 each depending on the sales and promotions available at the time and if buying in bulk (e.g., 100 masks). All of these masks have a flexible nose clip. BLUNA, BOTN, and POSH masks have

adjustable ear loops, which can provide a better fit, though remember that you will need to help your child adjust the ear loops to the desired length every time they use a new mask. Blue masks do not have adjustable ear loops. POSH masks come in different patterns/colors, but are also more expensive than the other options.

[KN95 AireTrust Nano Mask for Kids](#) (recommended/tested by NYT, experiencing stock issues)

Cost: \$17.50 for 5-pack

This is a KN95 mask, meaning it is certified by Chinese regulators to meet filtration requirements. The NYT also confirmed in lab testing that these masks provided the promised filtration. Note that there have been some issues with counterfeit KN95 masks, so stick to brands that have undergone third party testing.



Washable mask recommendations

There are now a number of washable masks that include a filter layer made of a similar material to that used in N95-style masks. These masks are multi-use, but each mask is more expensive.



[ENRO](#) (recommended/tested by NYT, experiencing stock issues)

Machine washable

Cost: \$16-18 each

Note: May run large. The smallest size (XXS) may not fit children younger than age 4.



[Happy Masks](#) – Pro series (recommended/tested by NYT, experiencing stock issues)

Hand wash

Cost: \$24 each



[MAX7 Kids Mask](#)

Machine washable

Cost: \$25 each

Note this mask claims to provide 96% filtration but I could not find any independent test results. It is, however, in stock unlike the other recommended washable options.

Resources:

New York Times Wirecutter Mask Review, updated Aug 3 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-kids-face-masks/#best-masks-for-toddlers>

Mask reviews / tests from Aaron Collins

Follow him on twitter and youtube: <https://twitter.com/masknerd>

Test results: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1M0mdNLpTWEGcluK6hh5LjjcFixwmOG853Ff45d3O-L0/htmlview>