

# The issues with Face Masks

- All types of medical masks essentially functioned as a low-pass acoustic filter for speech,
- attenuating the high frequencies (2000-7000 Hz) spoken by the wearer by 3 to 4 dB for a simple medical mask
- attenuating the high frequencies (2000-7000 Hz) close to 12 dB for the N95 mask
- speech quality degradation.
- room noise/reverberation.
- absence visual cues.
- Lost aids particularly RICs
- Comfort with RIC

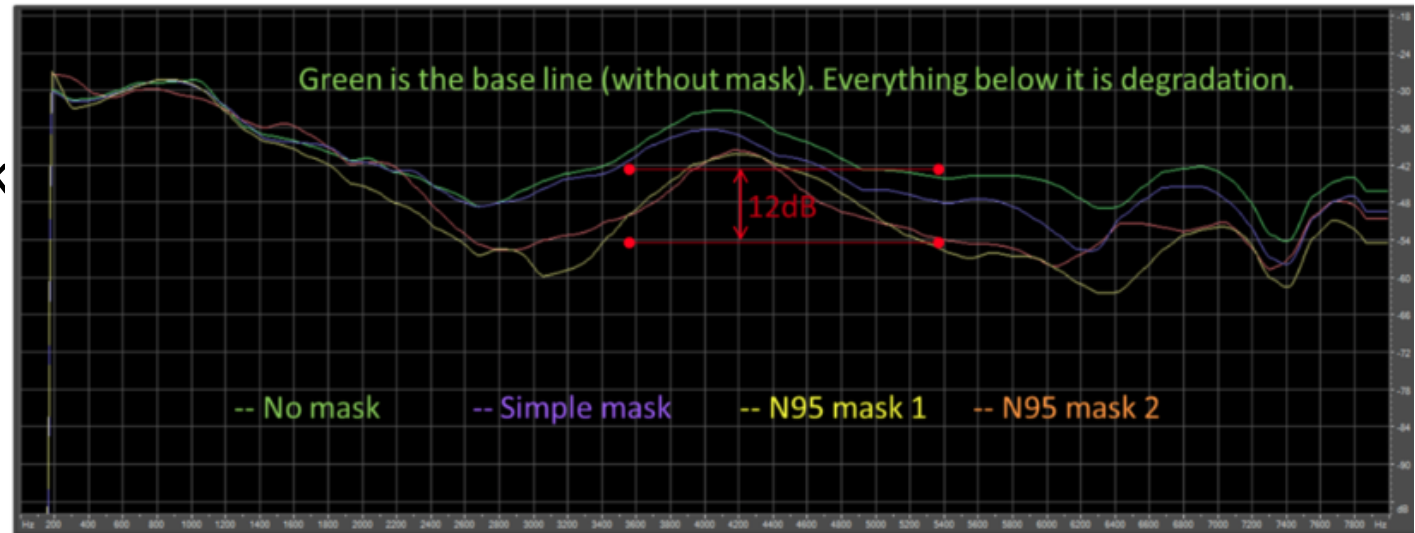


Figure 3. Output SPL level differences (in dB) by type of mask being worn.

<https://www.hearingreview.com/hearing-loss/health-wellness/how-do-medical-masks-degrade-speech-reception>



# Share information in the wider health network

## The Impact of Face Masks on Communication

There are 12 million people with hearing loss across UK.



1 in 6 people is living with a hearing impairment.

Many of these people rely on using their residual hearing (with or without a hearing aid) and lip reading to be able to communicate effectively.

Since the Corona Virus, the introduction of face masks have had a debilitating effect on the hearing impaired population.



These masks block faces and prevent our ability to see facial expressions, read lips, and connect.


**Masks + Blocked face  
= Increased Miscommunication**

## How to support patients with hearing impairments?

- Identify which patient has a hearing loss and ensure a plan is put in place on how you are going to communicate with them.
- If available, wear a see through surgical mask
- Write things down – use a mini white board that can be wiped clean.
- For patients that can use their residual hearing, ensure the environment is quiet, speak loudly and clearly.
- If the patient is a hearing aid user, ensure they are wearing their hearing aid and the battery is working.
- Use gestures and sign language.
- Use apps such as Google Live Transcribe or Otter which convert speech to text on a tablet or smart phone OR Now Interpreter where you can access a BSL interpreter for free for patients who uses BSL.
- Use video calls – staff member can go to a space where they can safely remove their mask and talk to the patient via video calls.

# Flashcards for use by medics

<https://www.cardmedic.com/>



**Digital Flashcards.**

**Search Now**

Browse our A-Z directory of flashcards designed to improve communication through the PPE barrier and upskill healthcare professionals and volunteers.

Family & Friends.

We know that this is an incredibly distressing time for you and we are truly sorry.

Unfortunately, due to the health risks involved, we are unable to allow visitors into the hospital.

We will do everything we can to help you make contact with your loved ones, either over the phone or via video calling.

Please let us know if there is anyone you would like us to help you call.

Who are your next of kin?

We will keep them updated on how you are doing.

Is there anyone you would NOT like us to talk to?

Any Questions.

We know we have given you a lot of information to take on board.

Is there anything you would like to talk through?

Is there anything you don't understand?

Do you have any questions?

Where Am I?

We know things may seem a little muddled for you at the moment.

We are here to help make you better and look after you.

You are safe.

You are currently in:

# Audiology Suggestions

- Set a Covid-19 programme: Increase soft sounds above 2kHz, leave the MPO as is
- Hand out good communication tactics advice
- Discuss the use of remote microphone technology with your patient's and family
- Draw up a tips leaflet for the live transcribe apps and add it to your online information packs

Cleaning a remote microphone use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol. Dry surface thoroughly. Wash your hands after disinfecting the microphone.





# Personal Suggestions



Remember.  
masks are like  
pants. If you're  
not wearing any,  
then you are  
exposing others  
to something  
they'd rather  
**NOT** deal with.

- Lancet evidence from 2,647 participants
- Cloth facemasks in enclosed spaces reduce transmission if everyone wears them.
- More than 1 layer of cloth
- Wash your hands when donning and doffing

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/blog/diy-face-masks-with-clear-panels/>