

## Update on Face Masks with Guidance from HLAA and CDC

HLAA has seen an explosion of information about the use of face masks and clear face masks during the coronavirus pandemic. We want to share some of that with you. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued a guidance that allows for the use of clear masks during the pandemic. The information below contains recommendations on safety during COVID-19, tackling communication challenges for people with hearing loss along with additional resources including a video about audibility when wearing clear and other face masks from the University of Illinois.

- CDC recommends that people wear masks in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other [social distancing](#) measures are difficult to maintain. [Read more.](#)
- CDC also recommends that people who have hearing loss or are deaf encourage others to wear clear masks so they can be more easily understood. People with hearing loss may be unable to understand others who are wearing face masks if they rely on lipreading to communicate. In this situation, the CDC recommends people consider using a clear mask. If a clear mask is not available, consider whether written communication, closed captioning, or decreasing background noise to make communication possible while wearing a mask is possible. HLAA suggests people should also consider using assistive listening systems or devices. [Read more.](#)

HLAA has signed onto two documents – one geared to [consumers](#) and one geared towards [employers and others](#) who work with or employ those with hearing loss.

- These documents provide a guide to best practices in communicating with people with hearing loss while wearing masks in a wide variety of contexts, including the workplace schools and businesses.
- In addition, a study has been published by the University of Illinois on the impact of face masks and hearing. HLAA advises that these are the first studies of their kind and more research is required to make further determinations. [Read more.](#)
- A study from the University of Notre Dame looks at transmission of the virus for different kinds of masks. [Read more.](#)
- Tina Childress, M.A., CCC-A, educational audiologist, once again does an excellent job demonstrating the impact of the various face masks on her ability to hear. [Read more.](#)