

Keeping everyone safe:
**The rules about face coverings in
England**



**The rules about face coverings
are different for England, Wales,
Northern Ireland and Scotland.**



**This easy read guide is about the
rules in England.**



It is now the law in England
that most people must wear a
face covering when they go to
many places.



All of these places are indoors.



The places where there are rules about wearing face coverings include:



- Shops, supermarkets and shopping centres



- Restaurants and cafes



- The library or town hall



- A museum or cinema



- Places of worship



- Public transport, like buses, trains, tubes, trams, taxis and stations.



- Aeroplanes and airports



- Hospitals – as a visitor or going to an appointment



- The GP surgery



- Visiting a care home



If you are not sure if the place you want to go has rules about face coverings, you can ask the staff at the door.



Who has to wear a face covering?



Most people have to wear a face covering.



But if you have a very good reason not to wear a face covering, you do not have to.



This is called being **exempt** from wearing a face covering.



Exempt means that you do not have to do something that other people do.



Reasons people do not have to wear a face covering include:



Your disability makes it very hard to put the face covering on, or take it off.



Your disability stops you being able to wear the face covering.



Wearing a face covering makes breathing problems worse or makes you feel very unwell.



Wearing a face covering makes you feel very worried or upset.



The person you are with needs to lip read.



You need to escape from harm or danger.



You are allowed to take face coverings off for reasons including:



You need to take medicine.



You need to eat or drink (but only if you have to).



You need to get away from harm or danger.



You must also take off your face covering if people who work in a place, or the police, ask you to.



If wearing the face covering makes you feel unwell, or you are finding it hard to breathe, it is ok to take it off.



If you do not feel better soon, ask for help.



If you are on public transport, you may want to get off for a bit and take a break.



If you find that wearing a face covering always makes you feel unwell or makes it hard to breathe, you do not have to wear a face covering in future.



What could happen if I do not wear a face covering?



If someone else is not wearing a face covering, it is not ok for you, or another member of the public, to ask them why.



Staff from the place you are visiting should not stop you from going in because you are not wearing a face covering.



But they might ask you why you are not wearing a face covering.



They could also call the police if they think you should be wearing a face covering.



The police can make you leave if you do not have a good reason for not wearing a face covering.



The police can also make you pay a **fine**.



A **fine** is when you have to pay money because you have done something wrong.



It may help you feel safer to have a card with you to help you explain why you are not wearing a face covering.



There are [cards you can print off and use here.](#)



There is no law about having to use a card to explain.



You do not have to use the card if you do not want to.



No one should be mean to you for not wearing a face covering.



If you have any problems you can:



- Speak to someone you trust



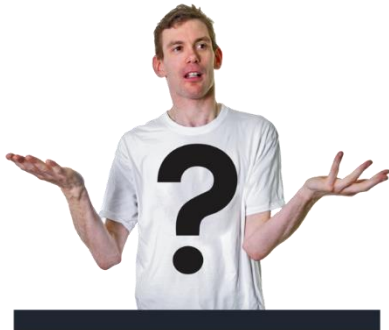
- Make a complaint



- Ask for help from the police



- Call the Mencap Learning Disability Helpline



What places do not have rules about face coverings?



Most indoor places that are open to the public or visitors have rules about face coverings now.



You do not need to wear a face covering in your home.



You do not need to wear a face covering when you are outside.



What about bars, pubs, cafes and restaurants?



You do not need to wear a face covering when you are eating or drinking at your table.



But, unless you are **exempt**, you will need to wear a face covering in other parts of the bar, pub or restaurant, including the queue or the toilets.



You may also have to wear a face covering at your table when you are not eating or drinking.



Ask the staff in the bar, café, pub or restaurant when you need to wear a face covering if you are not sure.



Do children have to wear a face covering?



Babies and small children who are 3 years old or younger, **should not** wear a face covering.



This is because it might be dangerous for them.



Children who are 11 years old or younger do not have to wear a face covering, but they can if they want to.

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