

**ON MASKS:
BY THE PROFESSION THAT
USES THEM THE MOST**

What do the studies say about the
use of masks in surgical theater?

17 Studies Compiled by

Arthur Firstenberg

Scientist, Journalist, Author

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Study Name:	The operating room environment as affected by people and the surgical face mask
Author(s):	M A Ritter , H Eitzen , M L French , J B Hart
Year Published	1975
Internet Link:	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/1157412/
Backup Link:	Click here

Study Name:	The operating room environment as affected by people and the surgical face mask
Author(s):	M A Ritter , H Eitzen , M L French , J B Hart
Year Published	1975
Internet Link:	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/1157412/
Backup Link:	Click here
Conclusion:	
“the wearing of a surgical face mask had no effect upon the overall operating room environmental contamination.”	

Study Name:	The efficacy of standard surgical face masks: an investigation using "tracer particles"
Author(s):	Ha'eri GB , Wiley AM
Year Published	1980
Internet Link:	https://europepmc.org/article/med/7379387
Backup Link:	Click here

Study Name:	The efficacy of standard surgical face masks: an investigation using "tracer particles"
Author(s):	Ha'eri GB , Wiley AM
Year Published	1980
Internet Link:	https://europepmc.org/article/med/7379387
Backup Link:	Click here
Conclusion:	
<p>“Applied human albumin microspheres to the interior of surgical masks in 20 operations. At the end of each operation, wound washings were examined under the microscope. Particle contamination of the wound was demonstrated in all experiments.”</p>	

Study Name:	Is a mask necessary in the operating theatre?
Author(s):	Neil W M Orr bMD Mchir FRCS
Year Published	1981
Internet Link:	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2493952/pdf/annrcse01509-0009.pdf
Backup Link:	Click here

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Author(s):	Neil W M Orr bMD Mchir FRCS
Year Published	1981
Internet Link:	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2493952/pdf/annrcse01509-0009.pdf
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Conclusion:	
<p>“It would appear that minimum contamination can best be achieved by not wearing a mask at all” and that wearing a mask during surgery “is a standard procedure that could be abandoned.”</p>	

Study Name:	Wearing of caps and masks not necessary during cardiac catheterization
Author(s):	Lawrence J. Laslett MD , Alisa Sabin
Year Published	1989
Internet Link:	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ccd.1810170306
Backup Link:	Click here

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Year Published	1989
Internet Link:	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ccd.1810170306
Backup Link:	Click here
Conclusion:	
<p>Found that caps and masks were not necessary during cardiac catheterization. “No infections were found in any patient, regardless of whether a cap or mask was used”</p>	

Study Name:	Postoperative wound infections and surgical face masks: A controlled study
Author(s):	Th. Göran Tunevall M.D.
Year Published	1991
Internet Link:	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF01658736
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Study Name:	Postoperative wound infections and surgical face masks: A controlled study
Author(s):	Th. Göran Tunevall M.D.
Year Published	1991
Internet Link:	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF01658736
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Conclusion:

A general surgical team wore no masks in half of their surgeries for two years. After 1,537 operations performed with masks, the wound infection rate was 4.7%, while after 1,551 operations performed without masks, the wound infection rate was only 3.5%.

Study Name:	Bag Exchange in Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis Without Use of a Face Mask: Experience of Five Years
Author(s):	Ana E. Figueiredo, Carlos E. Poli de Figueiredo, Domingos O. d'Avila
Year Published	2001
Internet Link:	http://www.advancesinpd.com/adv01/21Figueiredo.htm
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Year Published	2001
Internet Link:	http://www.advancesinpd.com/adv01/21Figueiredo.htm
Backup Link:	
Conclusion:	
<p>Reported that in five years of doing peritoneal dialysis without masks, rates of peritonitis in their unit were no different than rates in hospitals where masks were worn.</p>	

Study Name:	[Patient surgical masks during regional anesthesia. Hygienic necessity or dispensable ritual?]
Author(s):	Lahme T¹ , Jung WK , Wilhelm W , Larsen R
Year Published	2001
Internet Link:	https://europepmc.org/article/med/11760479
Backup Link:	Click here

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Author(s):	Lahme T¹ , Jung WK , Wilhelm W , Larsen R
Year Published	2001
Internet Link:	https://europepmc.org/article/med/11760479
Backup Link:	Click here
Conclusion:	
<p>“surgical face masks worn by patients during regional anaesthesia, did not reduce the concentration of airborne bacteria over the operation field in our study. Thus they are dispensable.”</p>	

Study Name:	Do Anaesthetists Need to Wear Surgical Masks in the Operating Theatre? A Literature Review with Evidence-Based Recommendations
Author(s):	M. W. SKINNER, B. A. SUTTON
Year Published	2001
Internet Link:	https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0310057X0102900402
Backup Link:	Click here

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Author(s):	M. W. SKINNER, B. A. SUTTON
Year Published	2001
Internet Link:	https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0310057X0102900402
Backup Link:	Click here
Conclusion:	
<p>“The evidence for discontinuing the use of surgical face masks would appear to be stronger than the evidence available to support their continued use.”</p>	

Study Name:	[Is use of surgical caps and masks obsolete during percutaneous heart catheterization?]
Author(s):	Sjøl A , Kelbaek H
Year Published	2002
Internet Link:	https://europepmc.org/article/med/11924291
Backup Link:	Click here

Study Name:	[Is use of surgical caps and masks obsolete during percutaneous heart catheterization?]
Author(s):	Sjøl A , Kelbaek H
Year Published	2002
Internet Link:	https://europepmc.org/article/med/11924291
Backup Link:	Click here
Conclusion:	
<p>Same as Laslett/Sabin study of 1989 “The routine use of caps and masks does not seem to have that much beneficial impact on the occurrence of procedure-related inflammations or infections in the cardiac catheterisation laboratory.”</p>	

Study Name:	Does evidence based medicine support the effectiveness of surgical facemasks in preventing postoperative wound infections in elective surgery?
Author(s):	Z. Bahli
Year Published	2009
Internet Link:	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20524498/
Backup Link:	Click here

Study Name:	Does evidence based medicine support the effectiveness of surgical facemasks in preventing postoperative wound infections in elective surgery?
Author(s):	Z. Bahli
Year Published	2009
Internet Link:	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20524498/
Backup Link:	Click here
Conclusion:	
“No significant difference in the incidence of postoperative wound infection was observed between masks groups and groups operated with no masks.”	

Study Name:	Use of face masks by non-scrubbed operating room staff: a randomized controlled trial
Author(s):	Joan Webster , Sarah Croger , Carolyn Lister , Michelle Doidge , Michael J. Terry , Ian Jones
Year Published	2010
Internet Link:	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1445-2197.2009.05200.x
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Author(s):	Joan Webster , Sarah Croger , Carolyn Lister , Michelle Doidge , Michael J. Terry , Ian Jones
Year Published	2010
Internet Link:	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1445-2197.2009.05200.x
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Conclusion:	
<p>Reported on obstetric, gynecological, general, orthopaedic, breast and urological surgeries performed on 827 patients. All non-scrubbed staff wore masks in half the surgeries, and none of the nonscrubbed staff wore masks in half the surgeries. Surgical site infections occurred in 11.5% of the Mask group, and in only 9.0% of the No Mask group.</p>	

Study Name:	Is Routine Use of a Face Mask Necessary in the Operating Room?
Author(s):	<u>Eva Sellden, M.D., Ph.D.; Hugh C. Hemmings, M.D., Ph.D.</u>
Year Published	2010
Internet Link:	https://pubs.asahq.org/anesthesiology/article/113/6/1447/9572/Is-Routine-Use-of-a-Face-Mask-Necessary-in-the
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Backup Link:	Click here
Conclusion:	
<p>In Sweden, recognizing the lack of evidence supporting the use of masks, ceased requiring them in 2010 for anesthesiologists and other non-scrubbed personnel in the operating room. “Our decision to no longer require routine surgical masks for personnel not scrubbed for surgery is a departure from common practice. But the evidence to support this practice does not exist,”</p>	

Study Name:	Disposable surgical face masks for preventing surgical wound infection in clean surgery
Author(s):	Allyson Lipp , Peggy Edwards
Year Published	2014
Internet Link:	https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD002929.pub2/full
Backup Link:	Click here

Study Name:	Disposable surgical face masks for preventing surgical wound infection in clean surgery
Author(s):	Allyson Lipp , Peggy Edwards
Year Published	2014
Internet Link:	https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD002929.pub2/full
Backup Link:	Click here
Conclusion:	
<p>“No statistically significant difference in infection rates between the masked and unmasked group in any of the trials.”</p>	

Study Name:	[Dubious effect of surgical masks during surgery]
Author(s):	Carøe T
Year Published	2014
Internet Link:	https://europepmc.org/article/med/25294675
Backup Link:	Click here

Study Name:	[Dubious effect of surgical masks during surgery]
Author(s):	Carøe T
Year Published	2014
Internet Link:	https://europepmc.org/article/med/25294675
Backup Link:	Click here

Conclusion:

This review based on four studies and 6,006 patients, wrote that “none of the four studies found a difference in the number of postoperative infections whether you used a surgical mask or not.”

Study Name:	Surgical Attire and the Operating Room: Role in Infection Prevention
Author(s):	Salassa, Tiare E. MD; Swiontkowski, Marc F. MD
Year Published	2014
Internet Link:	https://journals.lww.com/jbjsjournal/Abstract/2014/09030/Surgical Attire and the Operating Room Role in.11.aspx
Backup Link:	Click here

Study Name:	Surgical Attire and the Operating Room: Role in Infection Prevention
Author(s):	Salassa, Tiare E. MD; Swiontkowski, Marc F. MD
Year Published	2014
Internet Link:	https://journals.lww.com/jbjsjournal/Abstract/2014/09030/Surgical Attire and the Operating Room Role in.11.aspx
Backup Link:	Click here
Conclusion:	
<p>Investigated the necessity of scrubs, masks and head coverings in the operating room and concluded that “there is no evidence that these measures reduce the prevalence of surgical site infection.”</p>	

Study Name:	Unmasking the surgeons: the evidence base behind the use of facemasks in surgery
Author(s):	Charlie Da Zhou; Pamela Sivathondan; Ashok Handa
Year Published	2015
Internet Link:	https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0141076815583167
Backup Link:	Click here

Study Name:	Unmasking the surgeons: the evidence base behind the use of facemasks in surgery
Author(s):	Charlie Da Zhou; Pamela Sivathondan; Ashok Handa
Year Published	2015
Internet Link:	https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0141076815583167
Backup Link:	Click here

Conclusion:

Reviewing the literature in 2015, concluded that “there is a lack of substantial evidence to support claims that facemasks protect either patient or surgeon from infectious contamination.”

Study Name:	Disposable surgical face masks for preventing surgical wound infection in clean surgery
Author(s):	Marina Vincent , Peggy Edwards
Year Published	2016
Internet Link:	https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD002929.pub3/full
Backup Link:	Click here

Study Name:	Disposable surgical face masks for preventing surgical wound infection in clean surgery
Author(s):	Marina Vincent , Peggy Edwards
Year Published	2016
Internet Link:	https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD002929.pub3/full
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Conclusion:

This is an update of the 2014 Lipp study resulting in the same conclusion that “no statistically significant difference in infection rates between the masked and unmasked group.”

Access Article and Debate

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Truth	Truth belongs the most to those who love it the most. It keeps freedom afloat and prevents the deterioration of culture
Independency	Independent research and critical independent thinking are the right and the duty of every free person and prevent false and manipulative ideas from taking root
Anti-Censorship	Censoring vital information assumes people cannot or should not think for themselves to their own benefit. Expose all the perspectives and the truth will innately float to the top to take precedence where courageous truth-loving people can figure things out for themselves
Curate. Summarize. Circulate.	