

## 'Masks Are Symbolic,' say Dr Fauci and The New England Journal of Medicine

<https://hennesysview.com/masks-are-symbolic-dr-fauci/>

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In the past week, [Dr. Anthony Fauci](#) and the New England Journal of Medicine have admitted that masks are little more than symbols. Virtue signaling.

For those of you who shout “science” like it’s a Tourette tick, this is from [the New England Journal of Medicine on May 21, 2020](#): (see: [Universal Masking in Hospitals in the Covid-19 Era.pdf](#))

We know that wearing **a mask outside health care facilities offers little, if any, protection from infection**. Public health authorities define a significant exposure to Covid-19 as face-to-face contact within 6 feet with a patient with symptomatic Covid-19 that is sustained for at least a few minutes (and some say more than 10 minutes or even 30 minutes). **The chance of catching Covid-19 from a passing interaction in a public space is therefore minimal**. In many cases, the desire for widespread masking is a reflexive reaction to anxiety over the pandemic.

So, why are we ordered to wear masks? Symbolism. From the same article in [NEJM](#):

It is also clear that masks serve symbolic roles. Masks are not only tools, they are also talismans that may help increase health care workers’ perceived sense of safety, well-being, and trust in their hospitals.

The Surgeon General was widely mocked and ridiculed for suggesting in March that masks might even increase the spread of the virus. Yet, here, [the esteemed New England Journal of Medicine provides the same warning to mask-wearers](#):

What is clear, however, is that universal masking alone is not a panacea. A mask will not protect providers caring for a patient with active Covid-19 if it’s not accompanied by meticulous hand hygiene, eye protection, gloves, and a gown. A mask alone will not prevent health care workers with early Covid-19 from contaminating their hands and spreading the virus to patients and colleagues. **Focusing on universal masking alone may, paradoxically, lead to more transmission of Covid-19 if it diverts attention from implementing more fundamental infection-control measures**.

Thus, the argument is over. Anyone who advocates universal masking is merely engaging in virtue signaling, not public health.

It’s time to unmask. I, for one, don’t have enough virtue to signal.