

Advice to Patients on the Use of Face Coverings

The Government guidance suggests there is no requirement for evidence for exemption. It should be sufficient for someone to declare that they are eligible for an exemption direct with the person questioning them (e.g. bus driver).

Practices are therefore not required to provide letters of support for those who fall under the list of exemptions, or to those who do not fall under the list of exemptions.

For more information please see the gov.uk website and TFL websites here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#exemptions-face-coverings>

<https://tfl.gov.uk/campaign/face-coverings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#exemptions-to-wearing-a-face-covering-where-they-are-mandated>

Summary:

As of Friday 24 July, it will be mandatory to wear a face covering inside shops and supermarkets, as well as on public transport, with those who flout the rules facing a fine of up to £100.

Government guidance also encourages people in England to wear face coverings in enclosed public spaces where it is more difficult to observe social distancing, or where people are more likely to come into contact with others they would not normally meet.

However, some people will be exempt from the rules.

Government guidance states that you do not need to wear a face covering if you have a legitimate reason not to do so. This includes:

- * young children under the age of 11
- * not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness, or impairment, or disability
- * if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- * if you are travelling with, or providing assistance, to someone who relies on lip reading to communicate

- * to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others
- * to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm, and you do not have a face covering with you
- * to eat or drink, but only if you need to
- * to take medication
- * if a police officer or other official requests you remove your face covering

There are also scenarios when you are permitted to remove a face covering when asked:

- If asked to do so by shop staff for the purpose of age identification
- If speaking with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound. Some may ask you, either verbally or in writing, to remove a covering to help with communication

It is also not compulsory for shop or supermarket staff to wear face coverings, although it is recommended where appropriate and where other mitigating measures are not in place, such as screens or visors.

How can I get a face mask exemption card?

The charity Hidden Disabilities is now giving out a face mask exemption card for anyone with the right requirements to be exempt from the law.

There is no official card or proof that is required to show you are exempt from rules, as set out by the government. The card simply indicates that you have a hidden disability, illness or impairment, and as such, have a reasonable excuse for not wearing a face covering.

The card only costs 55p and can be used to show you are exempt from wearing a face covering on entering shops, supermarkets and on public transport.