

***INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS***

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***IABPFF Health & Safety Update:***

***“IABPFF Task up….. is to Mask up”***

**Mask Up! Don't Let Down Your Guard Against COVID-19**

Thursday July 2, 2020 (Health Day News) -- Even as the United States reopens, it's crucial that people wear [face masks](https://www.webmd.com/lung/coronavirus-face-masks) when they can't maintain proper social distancing, experts emphasize.

"While it's tempting to view [things] as being back to normal, that's simply not the case," said Dr. Patrick Gavigan, a pediatric infectious disease physician at Penn State Children's Hospital.

"The virus is still out there. We still have cases every day," he said in a Penn State Health news release.

In fact, 36 U.S. states are now seeing increases in COVID-19 infections, with Texas, Arizona and Florida posting record-breaking case counts in recent days. Much of that increase is being fueled by younger people testing positive for COVID-19, experts note. By Monday, the U.S. [coronavirus](https://www.webmd.com/lung/coronavirus) case count passed 2.5 million as the death toll neared 126,000, according to a *New York Times* tally.

Wearing a face mask, social distancing and hand-washing are essential defenses against transmission of the coronavirus, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says.

Face masks or other face coverings are especially important because research shows that people become contagious before they start having symptoms or feeling ill. And some people who test positive never have symptoms.

But Dr. Ping Du said less than half the people she sees -- especially young adults -- are wearing a mask when they should be.

"Current cases indicate that more and more young people are getting the disease. Maybe they feel they're not at risk or they'll only get a mild form of the disease," said Du, associate director of the doctor of public health program at Penn State College of Medicine.

"For whatever reason, they're not wearing their masks. They might have mild symptoms or be asymptomatic, but they can pass COVID onto others who are at greater risk of getting sick. Everyone should be wearing masks," added Du.

Face masks should be worn by anyone 2 years and older whenever and wherever social distancing measures are not possible, the CDC advises.

"It's easy to get mask fatigue and [fatigue](https://www.webmd.com/women/rm-quiz-fatigue-something-else) from all of the COVID-19 restrictions across the nation," Gavigan said. "But we can't let our guard down. Masks right now and for the foreseeable future remain a key part in keeping us safe...”

***Please Stay Safe,***

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