

## Use of Face Mask/Coverings in Babies and Young Children

The London Neonatal Operational Delivery Network (ODN) has been made aware of the promotion by some companies of baby and young children's face masks/coverings being available for sale. It appears that some face coverings are being described as 'baby masks' or 'cute masks' and present a significant safety concern for babies and children.

**Public Health England's Chief Nurse, Professor Viv Bennett has released the following statement:**

"PHE has been made aware that face coverings for babies and very young children are available for sale in England. Guidance is clear that children under the age of three years should not wear coverings or masks, these masks should not be used as they are potentially dangerous and can cause choking and suffocation."

### **Government Guidance:**

In England children under 3 years should **not** wear a mask. There are risks associated with babies and small children wearing masks that may increase the risk of suffocation and other hazards.

Children under 11 years old are exempt from guidelines on the use of face coverings in shops and public transport. Where children choose to wear a face covering it should be under the supervision of an adult at all times.

- **Children under three years of age should not wear face coverings or masks.**
- Wearing face coverings/masks is **not compulsory** in any public setting for **children aged 3-11**.
- The advice is that adults and children over the age of 11 years wear face masks in enclosed public spaces where it is difficult to socially distance. This may help prevent transmission of the virus to someone else if you are infected but do not yet have symptoms.
- Any adult or child with symptoms should self-isolate in line with the 'stay at home' guidance and get tested.
- If a parent is worried then they should call 111 or speak to their doctor.

### **Further information:**

<https://ihv.org.uk/news-and-views/news/phe-statement-face-coverings-for-babies-and-very-young-children/>

<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#when-to-wear-a-face-covering>