

US NEWS PREMIUM

# Mask Mandates for Children Mostly Harmful: Professor of Medicine

BY ZACHARY STIEBER AND JAN JEKIELEK April 21, 2021 Updated: April 23, 2021

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Requiring [children](#) wear [masks](#) does more harm than good, Dr. Jay Bhattacharya told The Epoch Times.

Bhattacharya advised Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis not to make children don face coverings.

Bhattacharya is a professor of medicine at Stanford University. He's a health economist by training.

"I think about things from a cost-benefit point of view, you have to think about what the costs and benefits are of any policy to set before you make a recommendation," Bhattacharya said on The Epoch Times' ["American Thought Leaders."](#)

"In the case of masks, the evidence [how] children spread the disease even without a mask is that they're much less efficient spreaders. It's not like the flu where children actually are efficient spreaders of the disease. In the case of coronavirus—for reasons we don't fully understand—children even unmasked are much less likely to spread the disease to adults, than an adult is to spread disease to an adult," he added.

Studies have found that young children transmit the [CCP \(Chinese Communist Party\) virus](#) less than older children and adults. Studies have shown children who do wear masks often undermine their effectiveness by touching them and repeatedly taking them on and off. Several studies determined that factors like irritation, difficulty

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Because children don't wear masks properly in many cases, the already-limited benefit is lowered even further, Bhattacharya said. On the other hand, there are serious repercussions to child development when they and others around them are wearing masks.

“Children have developmental needs that require them to see other people's faces. Learning to speak, for instance, requires seeing lips move. For slightly older children, they need to see people, the body, they learn body language, how to interact socially, by watching people. And when you ask them to wear a mask, you sort of cut that out. So you have harms on one side, and very little benefit on the other,” he added.



A man adjusts a child's mask in New York City, N.Y., on April 5, 2020. (Cindy Ord/Getty Images)

The World Health Organization (WHO) [recommends](#) no masks be required to be worn by children up to 5 years old and that policymakers weigh different facts when mulling whether to impose mask requirements on children between the ages of 6 and 11, such as the intensity of transmission of the CCP virus, which causes the COVID-19 disease, in the area where the child is and the latest data concerning spread from children

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Children should not wear a mask while doing sports or other physical activities, though they should maintain distancing of at least one meter from others, the international agency says, adding that masks can interfere with the learning process in schools and can have a negative impact on activities like physical education and meal times.

Some U.S. governors have mandated children wear masks. In Michigan, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's administration last week [ordered](#) children as young as 2 to don the coverings.

Bhattacharya also responded to how YouTube recently [removed a video](#) of a roundtable held by DeSantis, the Florida governor, that featured him and others talking about COVID-19 policies. YouTube has not responded to requests for comment.

"It's absolutely shocking," the professor said, adding that engaging in science means weighing different evidence about various matters.

"I think a healthy discussion, if they, if YouTube thinks that that children should wear masks, make that argument. Show us the evidence, show us your reasoning, and we can have a discussion," he said about the video, which is still available on other sites.

"So they're not actually trying to protect the public from an ineffective way, what they're trying to do is they want to warn the public that this is a dangerous idea. Well, if they're going to do that, they have a moral obligation to actually make arguments. They just censored it. They want to create this aura of you shouldn't hear this idea, as if it's some banned book. Rather than arguing why the banned book is bad, they just say it should be banned. They're the moral inheritors of book burners."

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