

## Do you need to wear a mask after vaccination against Covid-19 ?

There are several reasons why you should continue to wear a mask in shops, supermarkets and confined spaces after being vaccinated against Covid 19.

These are:

1. No vaccine is 100 % effective. Current indications are that the most effective vaccine prevented 95% of illnesses caused by the coronavirus. This means 1 in 20 vaccinated people will not be protected. One vaccine is showing only 65% effectiveness which means almost 1 in 3 people will not be protected.
2. Vaccines don't provide immediate protection. No vaccine is effective immediately. It takes about 2 weeks for the immune system to make the antibodies that block viral infections. Two of the vaccines currently available require a second jab about three weeks after the first. This means that full protection won't come until about 6 weeks after the first jab.
3. Unlike the measles vaccine that prevents vaccinated people from spreading the virus, the Covid vaccines, like the flu vaccines, prevent people from becoming sick, but not from passing the virus onto others.
4. People with compromised immune systems are more at risk and more likely to become infected. We don't know whether lung cancer patients, for instance, will be protected as these patients were not included in the trials.
5. It was no co-incidence that confirmed flu cases dropped dramatically in Australia after March 2020 as people took to social distancing and wearing masks. Masks will protect against any strain of the virus irrespective of genetic mutations.
6. The take-home message is to carry a mask at all times and wear it in the proscribed locations.

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