

April 10, 2020

To the Town of Durham,

Please do not let a homemade cloth mask or bandana give you such a sense of security that you relax adherence to social distancing guidelines and handwashing. New Covid19 research suggests that it is transmissible simply by breathing and is detectable at greater than 6 feet radius from the source. Folded bandanas and cloth masks offer little protection against it. (2%-38% filtration rate. An N95 is 95%). Data also suggests that patients are still able to transmit Covid19 days after their symptoms have gone. Therefore, strict social distancing and proper handwashing remain the most effective tools we have against Covid19.

Currently Covid19 guidelines are based upon what we generally know about about respiratory viruses. They are not necessarily based upon research regarding Covid19 specifically. At the outset of a novel pandemic, this is a necessity. However, as time goes on, we will find that some of our assumptions were right and some were wrong. New questions will arise, and old ones will go unanswered. My view is as always to err on the side that does no harm. To me, that means assuming that this new research is accurate and should be taken to heart unless conclusive scientific studies of Covid19 proves otherwise.

In conclusion, The WHO estimates 89 million N95s are needed monthly across the globe, and that without increasing production we will not have enough. Please do not run out and stock up on N95s unless your physician recommends otherwise. Frontline healthcare workers do not have enough. Their safety is our safety.

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A Few Sources

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