

Dr. Ungar says “Wear a mask... now!”

Respectfully to all of my patients and Lakewood residents:

At this moment, many people are undoubtedly carrying the Coronavirus without their knowledge. That’s a fact. They feel fine, they look fine, and appear to be healthy. In truth, they may never even develop symptoms of the virus and may never know they were exposed to it, and in a few hours, we all will be in shul together for Yom Kippur and soon, Sukkot.

As I sat in Shul on Rosh Hashana, I looked around at everyone wearing masks and asked myself... Is this necessary? Are we overreacting? I’m sure everyone is uncomfortable. Why do I have to be so uncomfortable? I feel fine. Knowing that my occupation (Dentistry) requires very close contact with people who may be carrying the Coronavirus, I’ve been wearing a mask everywhere I go for months. I wore my mask uninterrupted in Shul and said to myself... “I’m wearing this mask for HIM (the older man sitting a few feet in front of me to the right). I’m wearing it for HIM (the older man to my left). I’m wearing it for HIM (my good friend who was sitting directly in front of me). I’m wearing it for everyone, to protect everyone... And I’m wearing it for myself as well.”

In March and April, people we love and care about became critically ill. Masks became nearly impossible to find or purchase, and the Coronavirus wreaked havoc on all of our communities. Now we have a second chance. We have masks, and I’d like to explain why we all need to wear them, right now!

- Assume that EVERYONE is carrying the virus:
 - The only way to protect yourselves and others is to first assume that everyone around you is carrying the virus. You should also assume that you are carrying the virus.
 - If you can accept these assumptions (and pretend that everyone has the virus as all healthcare professionals do) then you will take the proper precautions necessary and wear a mask.
- Understand what “VIRAL LOAD” is:
 - The effects of “Viral Load” were well documented in China and by European studies, and may explain why so many people became critically ill so rapidly in March and April.
 - The more times you’re exposed to the virus (the more people you’re around that unknowingly carry the virus) the higher your Viral Load will become.
 - The higher your Viral Load, the more severe your symptoms.
 - The higher your Viral Load, the more infectious you are to others.
 - Wearing a mask will limit your Viral Load if you are exposed to someone carrying the virus.
 - Wearing a mask will limit your ability to spread the virus to others.
 - Wearing a mask may limit the severity of your symptoms if you do become exposed.

Every Yom Kippur we pray for another year of life and good health, because without those two things, “life” and “good health”, what else would be possible? What else could we accomplish? Who can work without good health? Who can learn Torah without good health? Who can care for their family? The list is endless...

We all agree that “good health” is critical and this year we have the opportunity to show Hashem just how important it is to all of us, not just through prayer and fasting, but through actual action! It’s a most fantastic opportunity to help one another and to save lives, and all we have to do is wear a mask!

Please wear a mask over the Holidays. Show Hashem that you’re serious about having “good health”, and protect and save everyone around you! You may not know it right now, but **in another week or two you may come to realize that by wearing a mask you kept your friends and family safe and in “good health”, and perhaps you may have even saved someone’s life!** May everyone be blessed to live a long life in good health to 120. G’mar Chatima Tova!

Dr. Ungar