

Bad Dog Agility Podcast: Wearing Masks in Dog Agility
May 29, 2020

All information is researched but not exhaustive and not reviewed by an outside expert. Although Esteban is a licensed physician, this is NOT medical advice --> you should get medical advice specific to your situation and health from your doctor, not from us or this podcast.

Link to the audio podcast: <https://baddogagility.com/episode-255-wearing-masks-in-dog-agility>

Why Should We Wear Masks?

Study came out 3 weeks ago titled “Universal Masking is Urgent in the COVID-19 Pandemic: SEIR and Agent Based Models, Empirical Validation, Policy Recommendations”

- The authors (who are from Hong Kong, UK, France and Finland) compared countries with high levels of mask-wearing to ones with low levels. Using computer modeling and real-world data, they found masks could reduce transmission.
- The study concluded that if 80% of the population wore masks, there would be more than a 90% drop in infection rates.

Etiquette and Politics Concerning Masks

- Wearing a mask does not give sick people permission to attend a trial.
- Allergies and upper respiratory infections can look similar, don't assume the best case (that you have allergies). Instead, assume you are sick and stay home.
- Risk tolerance is key, but this is subjective and based on personal risk factors. However, understand that you will likely be unhappy for two different reasons:
 - Either you feel that there are not enough rules in place (and/or too many violations) so that you don't feel comfortable being there because you fear getting the virus. If so, STAY HOME.
 - Or you feel that there are too many rules in place (and they are unnecessary) so that you don't feel comfortable being there because people are upset with you for “bending” or breaking the rules. If so, STAY HOME.
 - Sample statement from AKC premium: “If you are concerned about the possibility of exposure to the coronavirus OR if you are unwilling to follow the states rules, it would be best if you did not enter this July trial.”
 - Every personal situation is addressed by that statement.

CDC Guidelines

Who Should Wear?

- People older than 2 years of age in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain

Who Should Not Wear?

- Anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance

- *In Esteban's opinion, these people should not be at agility trials because they are at high risk for complications from coronavirus infection.*

General Considerations

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face.
 - Comfort is important. Kap 7 masks 82% Polyester/18% elastane
 - Shopping time, you should have a mask for every day of the week, like underwear! Children require a smaller fit. Leave your children at home. Leave guests at home--don't bring them to agility trials.
 - If it doesn't fit well, especially around the nose, you will suck in unfiltered air from around your face.
- Include multiple layers of fabric
 - PM2.5 N95 Activated Carbon Filter Mask Insert (100 for \$100)
 - Blocks at least 95% of viruses as small as 0.3 microns
 - Virus even smaller but carried on droplets that are 5-10 microns
 - Thread count of 180 or better for materials like sheets/pillowcases
 - HEPA vacuum bags (hard to breathe)
 - NO A/C BAGS DUE TO FIBERGLASS
- Be secured with ties or ear loops.
 - Ties are more adjustable than a rubber band behind the ear!
 - Metal to form the nose helps contour the mask to avoid gaps
- Allow for breathing without restriction.
- Remove very carefully, don't touch the mask part, just touch the ties.
- Be able to be laundered and machine-dried without damage or change to shape.
 - Air dry is okay, leave it in the sun if possible.
 - Hotter is better than colder for washing and drying.

Two situations for masks: low risk and high risk. Agility trials will be high risk. Crowded grocery stores are high risk. Walking outdoors alone is low risk. Use your filters and higher quality masks for higher risk situations and opt for comfort and no filters in low risk situations.

Special Dog Agility Considerations

- Your dog's comfort level with masks
- Other dogs' comfort level with masks
- Difference in your voice
- Difference in facial expression

The American Kennel Club (AKC) is deferring to clubs in that they should "consider recommending that exhibitors wear masks. Exhibitors should be able to run without a mask if they desire. Judges may wear masks at their discretion if not required by the club." See the document here:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn-origin-etr.akc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/12160607/Agility-Covid-19-Suggested-Best-Practices.pdf>

CPE Guidelines effective May 11

Philosophy: As dog sports are very “social”, we are choosing not to use the term “social distancing” rather refer to it as “physical distancing”.

MASKS: Masks are to be worn by anyone within the ring (building, walking, running, judging). Masks are up to the individual, club, local, state and government guidelines when not within the ring. Exhibitors who will be wearing masks will need to bring enough masks for the duration of the trial and dispose of single use masks properly.

Make sure your dog is ok with people wearing masks. We don't want a dog becoming fearful due to something they've never seen before.

From Esteban: We can come together as a community in order to save our sport and rebuild it in the coming years.

Resources:

- We should wear masks study is here:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340933456_Universal_Masking_is_Urgent_in_the_COVID-19_Pandemic_SEIR_and_Agent_Based_Models_Empirical_Validation_Policy_Recommendations
- CDC guidelines here:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>
- Mayo Clinic interview about masks here:
<https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/covid-19-mayo-clinic-expert-answers-questions-about-masks-after-cdc-updates-its-recommendation/>
- Video: Pulmonologist Marjorie Patricia George MD demonstrates how to put on and remove a cloth mask properly https://youtu.be/iGE5eny_9gA
- Order swim suit material masks here: <https://www.kap7.com/masks-1/>
- Order masks with metal nose bridge and pocket inserts here:<https://www.masqd.com/collections/masks>
- Order mask filters here: <https://www.masqd.com/collections/masks/products/mask-filter>
- AKC Guidelines here:
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn-origin-etr.akc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/12160607/Agility-Covid-19-Suggested-Best-Practices.pdf>
- USDAA Guidelines here:
<https://usdaa.com/news/best-practices-when-agility-events-return.cfm>
- CPE Guidelines here: <http://www.k9cpe.com/premiums/covid19letter05112020.pdf>