Health & Medicine

Changing Minds About Masks

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A Columbia-led online PR campaign to promote the use of face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic has achieved a major milestone, reaching more than one million people.

Wearing is Caring, which was launched by a dozen postdoctoral researchers and undergraduate students last summer, produces playful infographics, slide shows, and true-false quizzes on topics such as how to properly wear a mask and the pros and cons of various types of personal protective equipment (PPE). The group's content, which can easily be downloaded and shared via social media, also addresses common myths about mask-wearing — such as that a mask can make a wearer sick — with links to relevant scientific publications.

“Shifting public-health guidelines and misleading claims have caused confusion over whether face coverings are effective,” says Tiffany Chen, a research staff assistant at Columbia’s Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute who oversees the group’s PPE guidelines. “Our goal is to present scientific evidence, in a way that is credible and easy to understand, that will help persuade the undecided that face masks really do save lives.”



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