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Kids adapt to wearing masks – for safety's sake

Angela Roberts Special to the Fauquier Times
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Gretel and Gabriela Warhurst don't mind wearing masks when they are out and about.

Courtesy Photo

Eight-year-old Tucker Biegler knows just what to do to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus.

His voice muffled under a galaxy-splattered mask, he ticked down the list on his fingers as he stood in Warrenton's Food Lion parking lot: "One: Social distancing; Two: Wear a mask; Three: Hand sanitizer." Plus, he said, masks can be comfortable — but not if they're worn upside

down.

“It basically provides a safe environment,” Tucker said, cocking his head from side to side. “It helps me and my community stay safe!”

For two months now, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that everyone over the age of 2 wear a face mask in situations where staying 6 feet away from others is tricky.

That means kids have had to get used to a new accessory when running errands with their parents. Most chain stores have begun selling child-sized masks.

Making this adjustment has been easier for some than others.

Nine-year-old Gannon McClung’s blue surgical mask hung loosely below his nose as he helped his mom grab a shopping cart at Food Lion’s entrance. He doesn’t like wearing it too much, he said. It makes him hot — especially on days like Monday, when temperatures sailed up in the high 80s.

But he knows it’s important. “It protects you,” he said softly.

Wyatt Utt, a rising fifth grader, has found wearing a mask generates other difficulties, besides making a hot day seem even hotter: When he put on his sunglasses, they fogged up real fast. The bottom of the mask can also get uncomfortable on his chin, he said.

Still, he said he straps one on any time he goes into a store — like the Walmart he stood outside of Monday — “to keep other people safe from my germs.”



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Gabriela Warhurst, 11, doesn't mind wearing a mask. It's not terrible or even uncomfortable, she said. So, when she sees people walking around town or in stores without wearing one, she's confused.

"It's not that hard to just put on a mask," she said.

Her sister Gretel agreed. She actually likes wearing a mask — it makes her feel safe.

"It feels good to wear a mask because it protects me from getting germs that way," said Gretel, who is 9. "Also, I don't spread any other germs to any other people."

Back in the Food Lion parking lot, Tucker's sister Leigh, 11, says masks can be comfortable to wear although they can get pretty warm sometimes. Nonetheless, she likes wearing them.

"It makes me feel that I'm keeping others safe," she said.