

# Communication tips when using face masks

Face masks are particularly challenging for people with hearing loss. Here are some tips for how you can improve communication when wearing a mask.



## Wear a clear face mask

If possible, wear a mask that allows people to read your lips when you are talking and see your expressions more clearly.



## Be attentive

If the person you are talking to has a hard time understanding you, rephrase the sentence instead of just repeating it.



## Be patient

Most face masks make lip reading impossible and muffle the sound. Therefore, be patient with the person you are talking to.



## Use other forms of communication

Communicate using pen and paper, use your mobile or tablet audio recorder, or use a virtual assistant.



## Be mindful of distance

As the distance between two people increases, the sound level drops, and visual signals are harder to decipher.



## Be visible

Make sure you face the person you are talking to. Avoid talking as you walk away from the person or turning your face in a different direction.



## Be clear and distinct

Speak loudly, but do not shout. Focus on speaking slowly and clearly, but do not exaggerate your words. Use plain language.



## Ensure that you have been understood

Check understanding by asking the person to repeat information back.



## Eliminate background noise

Reduce ambient noise or move the conversation to a quiet place if possible.



## Join the conversation

Offer to accompany the person with hearing loss for an appointment where face masks are worn, to help them hear.



## Use a speech-to-text interpreter

Speech-to-text interpretation is available via mobile phone apps and can be used in everyday interactions to provide live captioning of the conversation.