

I am a retired microbiologist with [REDACTED] I am

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I am alarmed at the current lack of government interest in clean air indoors.

The National COVID-19 Health Management Plan (2023) did not go far enough in ensuring indoor air is safe for immunocompromised citizens.

For example, it states:

1. 'If a positive COVID-19 result is received, stay home where possible, and if you must leave, wear a mask and avoid high-risk settings.'
2. 'All aged care homes should encourage staff and visitors to wear a face mask when indoors and in close contact with other people at a residential care home.'

However, there is no mention of the type of mask recommended. Many Australians now wear surgical masks, which merely protect the wearer from contact with large particles (droplets and sprays). However, the Covid-19 virus is now known to be airborne and far too tiny to be 'filtered' by surgical masks. N95 masks are required to remove viruses from inhaled air. (N95 masks not only block small particles, they also attract them with the electric interaction, so they get stuck to the fibres.) N95 and KN95 masks were found to be 48% more effective than surgical or cloth masks (Andrejko et al, 2022).

There is also no mention of ventilation or air cleanliness. Ventilation and the use of HEPA air purifiers should be mandated in any building where people gather indoors.

Dr Melanie Weckert

Reference

Andrejko KL, Pry JM, Myers JF, et al. Effectiveness of Face Mask or Respirator Use in Indoor Public Settings for Prevention of SARS-CoV-2 Infection — California, February–December 2021. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 2022;71:212–216.

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