



I am autistic

July 2020

As of 24 July in England, people have to wear a face covering in shops, supermarkets, shopping centres and transport hubs such as train stations, unless they have a legitimate reason not to.

The new rules say I don't have to wear a face covering if I can't put one on, wear or remove one because of my disability or without becoming severely distressed.

The Government has given examples of when people don't have to wear a face covering, which include:

- if you are under the age of 11 (Public Health England does not recommend face coverings for children under the age of three for health and safety reasons)
- if you can't put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading to communicate
- if this helps avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to you or others.

Autistic people sometimes:



- struggle with change, new situations and talking to new people
- get very anxious in social situations
- feel overwhelmed by lights, noise and too much information
- need extra time to process information, like questions or instructions
- have meltdowns or go into shut down if it is all too much.

The Government's list is not exhaustive, which means there could be other reasons why you don't have to wear a face covering. **Thank you for your understanding.**



To find out more, go to www.autism.org.uk