

Harm Reduction for Hugging!

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/04/well/family/coronavirus-pandemic-hug-mask.html>

Here are the do's and don'ts of hugging, based on the advice of experts: Don't hug face to face. “This position is higher risk because the faces are so close together,” Marr said. “When the shorter person looks up, their exhaled breath, because of its warmth and buoyancy, travels up into the taller person's breathing zone. If the taller person is looking down, there is opportunity for the huggers' exhaled and inhaled breaths to mingle.”

1. **Do hug facing opposite directions.** For a safe, full-body hug, turn your faces in opposite directions, which prevents you from directly breathing each other's exhaled particles. **Wear a mask.**
2. **Don't hug with cheeks together, facing the same direction.** This position, with both huggers looking in the same direction, also is higher-risk because each person's exhaled breath is in the other person's breathing zone.
3. **Do let children hug you around the knees or waist.** Hugging at knee or waist level carries lessened risk for direct exposure to droplets and aerosols because faces are far apart. The adult should look away so as not to breathe down on the child.
4. **Don't breathe during the hug.** Dr. Julian Tang, a virologist and associate professor at the University of Leicester in England, advocates for holding your breath during hugs. “Most hugs last less than 10 seconds, so people should be able to manage this,” Tang said. “Then back away to at least 2-meter [about 6 feet] separation before talking again to allow them to catch their breath at a safe distance.”
5. **Do kiss your grandchild on the back of the head.** In this scenario, the grandparent is minimally exposed to the child's exhaled breath. The child could be exposed to the taller person's breath, so kiss through a mask.
6. **Don't talk.** Yuguo Li, a University of Hong Kong engineering professor and senior author on the paper that Marr cited to make the calculations, said that hugs probably pose less risk than a longer face-to-face conversation. “The exposure time is short, unlike conversation, which can be as long as we like,” he said.
7. **Do choose hugs wisely.** “I would hug close friends, but I would skip more casual hugs,” Marr said. “I would take the Marie Kondo approach: The hug has to spark joy.”