Sharma says he and his co-author
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Dr. Richard Watkins, an infectious disease physician in Akron, Ohio, and a professor of internal medicine at the Northeast Ohio Medical University, who did not participate in the study, tells Yahoo Life that it's "scientifically plausible" that layers would matter more than the style of masks. "The more layers, the better, " he adds.

However, Watkins says, "More research is needed, especially replication studies and studies that sample airborne particles in real-world settings, before neck gaiters can be recommended over masks. "

The tide may be turning for neck gaiters, though. Preliminary results from a study conducted at Virginia Tech analyzed the effectiveness of a single-layer gaiter made of 100 percent polyester and a two-layer gaiter, made with 87 percent polyester and 13 percent spandex. The researchers found that both gaiters stopped 100 percent of very large, 20-micron droplets and 50 percent of one-micron aerosols. For smaller particles, the single-layer gaiter blocked only 10 percent of 0. 5-micron particles; the double-layer gaiter blocked 20 percent. But when the researchers doubled the single-layer gaiter, it blocked more than 90 percent of all particles.

Sharma calls bans on neck gaiters in some areas "very unfortunate, " adding, "fighting this pandemic requires us to encourage everyone to wear face coverings, and excluding a very popular face covering is a mistake. "

Sharma is hoping his research will be one among other findings that can help change the CDC's stance on neck gaiters. "The CDC is simply saying that they can't recommend gaiters yet, because they haven't received enough data, " he says. "This is partly the reason why we wanted to study their effectiveness and ensure there is as much evidence-based information in market as possible for the public. ".

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