

# PROPER MASK USE GUIDELINES

All employees are now required to wear masks while on duty. This practice will be continually monitored and re-evaluated for any needed changes.

## Rationale for Masking

Given what we have learned about COVID-19, this masking approach will serve to:

1. Act as a barrier to prevent touching of one's face in the event one's hands have become contaminated.
2. Help in protecting our patients and other staff members from droplet transmission.

To be successful, this approach will require support from all of us across the enterprise and require the following:

- » Adherence to extended use/reuse of masks
- » Adherence to hand hygiene (including before and after removing masks)
- » Proper mask use and hygiene including wearing the mask as directed to cover the mouth and nose
- » Proper removal and storage of mask when not in use.

## Proper Storage of Masks:

Staff member should leave patient care area if they need to remove the mask. Masks should be carefully folded so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage. The folded mask can be stored between uses in a clean sealable paper bag or breathable container.

In order to conserve masks, they should be used throughout the shift and should be reused each day. The exception is if the masks become visibly soiled, damp or damaged. In these cases, the mask should be replaced.

## To apply mask:

1. Perform hand hygiene
2. Place mask  
Pinch mask to fit across nose.
3. Place loops behind the ears.
4. Ensure mask covers both mouth and nose.
5. Perform hand hygiene

## To remove mask with intent to reuse:

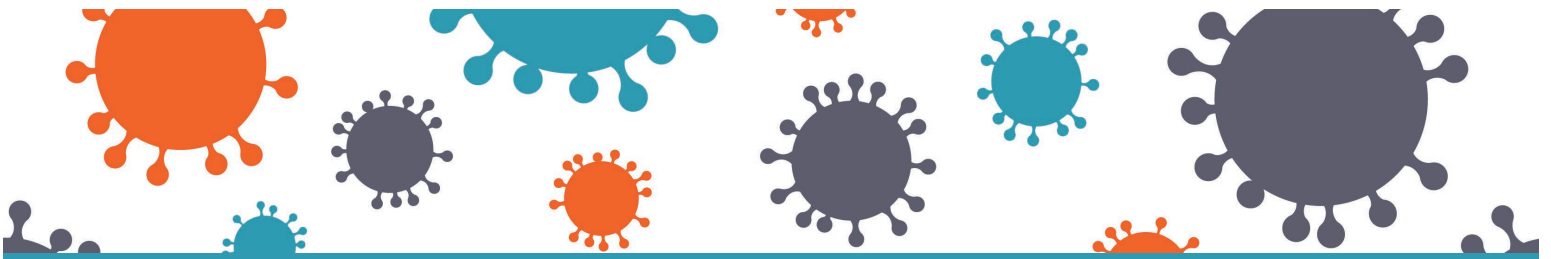
1. Perform hand hygiene
2. Remove mask  
Remove mask by holding the ear loops. The front is potentially contaminated.
3. After removing mask, visually inspect.  
If soiled, torn, or saturated the mask should be discarded.
4. If the mask is NOT visibly soiled, torn, or saturated...  
The mask can be reused.
5. Perform hand hygiene.

Improper Usage



Proper Usage





# IMPLEMENT LIMITED RE-USE OF FACEMASKS

Extended use of facemasks is the practice of wearing the same facemask for repeated close contact encounters with several different patients, without removing the facemask between patient encounters.

- The facemask should be removed and discarded if soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through.
- HCP must take care not to touch their facemask. If they touch or adjust their facemask they must immediately perform hand hygiene.
- HCP should leave the patient care area if they need to remove the facemask.

**Restrict facemasks to use by HCP, rather than patients for source control.**

Have patients with symptoms of respiratory infection use tissues or other barriers to cover their mouth and nose.

## Crisis Capacity Strategies

**Cancel all elective and non-urgent procedures and appointments for which a facemask is typically used by HCP.**

**Use facemasks beyond the manufacturer-designated shelf life during patient care activities.**

If there is no date available on the facemask label or packaging, facilities should contact the manufacturer. The user should visually inspect the product prior to use and, if there are concerns (such as degraded materials or visible tears), discard the product.

## Implement limited re-use of facemasks.

Limited re-use of facemasks is the practice of using the same facemask by one HCP for multiple encounters with different patients but removing it after each encounter. As it is unknown what the potential contribution of contact transmission is for SARS-CoV-2, care should be taken to ensure that HCP do not touch outer surfaces of the mask during care, and that mask removal and replacement be done in a careful and deliberate manner.

- The facemask should be removed and discarded if soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through.
- Not all facemasks can be re-used.
- Facemasks that fasten to the provider via ties may not be able to be undone without tearing and should be considered only for extended use, rather than re-use.
- Facemasks with elastic ear hooks may be more suitable for re-use.
- HCP should leave patient care area if they need to remove the facemask. Facemasks should be carefully folded so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage. The folded mask can be stored between uses in a clean sealable paper bag or breathable container.