Updated Masking Guidelines FAQ
Updated Masking Guidelines FAQs

Q. Who will receive masks for their shift?
A. Staff who work within units where direct patient care is provided are required to wear a mask. In procedural settings, additional personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn according to Infection Prevention and Control guidelines.

As of April 6, all other staff, including those onsite in non-patient care areas but within a building where care is provided as well as those in buildings where there is no patient care: Cloth masks are recommended by both the CDC and Mayo Clinic.

Q. Where do I get a mask?
A. Staff who provide direct patient care will continue to get their masks from unit leaders. For all other staff, a mask will be provided.
Staff in non-patient care areas may pick up a mask on DATES, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. at these locations:

- “How to” make a mask (CDC instructions)

Beginning the week of DATE, staff will need to find and/or make their own personally provided cloth mask.

Q. When should staff wear a mask?
A. You should wear a mask at all times while at work, except when eating or drinking.

Q. When should you not use your mask?
A. If you will be performing a procedure that requires a respirator (e.g., N95, PAPR or CAPR), remove and safely store your mask. You can reapply your mask afterwards.

Q. Can you reuse your mask the next day?
A. Yes. The non-cloth mask should continue to be reused as long as it is intact and not soiled or damaged. You must try to conserve everyday masks and personal protective equipment as much as possible.

Extended use of non-cloth masks is the practice of wearing the same face mask for contact with several patients without removing the face mask between patient encounters. Reuse refers to using the same mask multiple times. Both reuse and extended use are encouraged.
Here’s how to fold and store your mask appropriately.

Q. What do you do when your non-cloth mask is soiled, damaged or no longer usable?
A. When your non-cloth mask is soiled, damaged or no longer usable, you should discard it on your unit. Perform hand hygiene after removing the mask.

Q. Can you reuse your cloth mask the next day?
A. Yes. Wash personal masks daily and change them when visibly soiled. Consider having a spare, clean mask available.

Q. How do I ensure cleanliness and professional standards for my cloth mask?
A. Professional standards include wearing masks that fit appropriately and choosing fabric (e.g., patterned or solid colors) that contributes to a patient’s feeling of comfort and safety.

Remember that all masks should be handled using best practices, including:

- Complete hand hygiene before and after placing your mask, and avoid contaminating the mask by touching it.
- Wash personal masks daily and change them when visibly soiled. Consider having a spare, clean mask available.
- Personal masks may not be worn in isolation or procedure rooms. {Organization} provided personal protective equipment must be used.

Q. How do you store your non-cloth mask between uses?
A. To allow your mask to be reused, store the mask between uses in a new, clean bag that provides for airflow to avoid moisture retention. A new paper bag or new plastic bag with a hole cut in it for air circulation will work. Do not reuse a contaminated bag.

Q. How should you safely remove your mask?
A: You should remove the mask without touching the front of it.

Q: How should you put your mask back on after storing it?
A: When putting on your mask for reuse, clean your hands, remove the mask from storage, place it on your face, adjust the fit and clean your hands.

Q. When wearing a mask, what should you do when eating or drinking?
A. You should remove and store your mask to eat and drink. After removing the mask, you should clean your hands. Ensure social distancing while eating and drinking. To prevent self-contamination, do not pull the mask down or leave it on in any way while eating or drinking.

Q. Can you pull down your mask to talk to someone?
A. No. It is important to keep your mask appropriately in place over the nose and mouth to provide intended protection. Try to avoid manipulating the mask as much as possible once it is on.

Q. What should you do if you accidentally touch your mask?
A. You should perform hand hygiene immediately after touching the mask.

Q. Should patients and visitors be masked?
A. Patients and visitors should be encouraged to wear homemade or cloth masks, or others they have personally obtained, on {Organization} property.

Q. Is {Organization} at risk of running out of personal protective equipment?
A. At this time, {Organization} has enough supplies to sustain its focused masking effort, provided that everyone adheres to personal protective equipment conservation principles. However, {Organization} wants to be as prepared as possible and is developing plans for reprocessing and other options to manufacture masks. Any necessary process changes needed to support these efforts will be communicated in the future. Stewardship of {Organization} resources and avoiding unnecessary use of personal protective equipment is critical.

Q. Can you take your mask home after your shift?
A. Non-cloth masks should be stored per outlined recommendations when not in use or thrown away on the unit if soiled or damaged. Cloth masks should be taken home and washed.
Q. What happens if someone doesn't follow the policy and takes too many masks or takes some for personal use?
A. If the appropriate use of masks isn't followed, supervisors are encouraged to follow corrective actions guidelines, as such actions are considered theft, misuse, misallocation or inappropriate use, as well as disregard for safety rules and (Organization) safety practices.

Q. What should you do with your mask if you're going into different isolation rooms?
A: Unless a respirator is required, you can wear your mask into the room. If the mask was contaminated in the room, discard the mask upon exit, perform hand hygiene and put on a new mask.