

FAQs for Use of Masks

In this unprecedented time, our work environment is changing rapidly. We continue to follow recommendations from the World Health Organization, as well as guidance from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

In addition to isolation precautions we've already implemented, effective Tuesday, March 31, 2020, we will be implementing the Non-Isolation Related PPE policy (also attached to this email), which is consistent with what many other health care systems are doing in the state of Ohio and across the country. At this time, this policy applies to **masks only**.

1. How should I store my mask?

- Masks should be discarded if wet, soiled, damaged (holes, rips, tears) or becomes hard to breathe through.
- Providers and Employees should perform hand hygiene before and after handling masks.
- While the employee is not working face-to-face or in a direct patient care environment, 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. Folded masks can be stored between uses in a clean sealable paper bag or Ziplock baggie or breathable container or hang below your chin resting on your neck.
 - We encourage that you bring a bag from home for your mask but will have a limited supply of bags available.
 - Please write your name on both sides of the bag so that it is easily identifiable as yours.
- If the mask is made of cloth, it should be washed at home between shifts. Laundering is the responsibility of the employee.
- Masks not made of cloth should be discarded in a trash can prior to leaving the work area.

2. How should I handle and care for my mask?

Employees should perform appropriate hand hygiene after handling a mask after it is worn. We ask that if you remove your mask at any point throughout your shift, carefully fold the mask so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage, then place it inside your bag. If the mask is made of cloth, it should be washed at home between shifts. Laundering is the responsibility of the employee.

3. What should I tell a patient who asks why I am wearing a mask?

Your safety and that of our care team is our top priority. We have begun wearing masks to help ensure your safety and that of our staff during your stay with us. We are wearing these masks when caring for **all** patients, regardless of symptoms.

4. Can I wear the mask I bring to work in common areas (hallways, etc.)?

Yes, although it is not required, you can wear your mask throughout your shift no matter where you go at our sites of care.