

Universal Masking: Procedural Masks and Cloth Masks



S	Situation	<p>For the health and safety for both our patients and our team members, we will be implementing universal masking for all team members, both clinical and non-clinical, entering any Central Maine Healthcare acute care facilities starting April 1.</p> <p>We believe “universal masking” is the best approach to further reduce the risk of the community spread of COVID-19 and it will decrease the risk of transmission from/to those without symptoms.</p>
B	Background	<p>Masks provide protection from microorganisms and secretions which are transmitted in Droplet form. They typically fall within 6’ of someone who talks, coughs, etc. These droplets can fall onto surfaces and sometimes we can infect ourselves when we touch and transfer these droplets to our eyes, nose, or mouth.</p> <p>Procedural masks have been tested to provide protection from droplet transmission. Cloth masks do not undergo testing, and although form a protective barrier to the nose and mouth, may not provide the same amount of protection.</p>
A	Assessment	<p>Masking supplies will be located at all open entrances. The type of mask, procedural mask or home sewn cloth mask, shall be dispensed based upon the risk of transmission your job involves.</p> <p>Procedural masks shall be provided to all direct patient care givers: defined as those HCW spending 5 minutes or more within 6’ of a patient.</p> <p>Cloth masks will be provided for those HCW with a lower risk of transmission; those not involved in the provision of patient care or in their immediate environment.</p> <p>To know which mask is the better choice for your role you will be screened upon entry at the start of your shift.</p> <p>The mask you receive will be your mask for the day.</p>
R	Recommendation	<p>Masks need to be worn at all times within the facility.</p> <p>If they are to be removed for breaks or to eat, they should be placed in the provided paper bag, in order to keep them from being crushed or contaminated. Label your bag with your name and the date.</p> <p>Proper masking technique</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sure to perform hand hygiene before putting on your mask and after removal. • Make sure the mask covers both your nose and mouth, do not allow it to “dangle.” • Avoid touching your mask and your face. • Maintain vigorous hand hygiene throughout your day/shift. • Follow instructions for proper extended use and reuse of masks. • Masks should not be used if they become wet, damaged, are difficult to breath while on, or become contaminated during the care of a patient. <p>At the end of the day, remove your mask and discard it into the trash upon leaving the facility.</p> <p>Cloth masks can be deposited in the hampers on your way out. They will completely washed and dried between uses. This will remove all contamination and in no way will contribute to the transmission of infection between wearers after cleaning.</p> <p>As the PPE shortage intensifies, we may be asked to wear the masks for >1 shift.</p>