

Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania Clinical Practices of the University of Pennsylvania Policy Manual	Effective: 6/15/2020 Page: 1 of 6
Subject: Patient, Visitor and Hospital Staff Mask Policy During COVID-19 Pandemic	Number: 1-12-93

Key Words:

Patient Masking
 Visitor Masking
 Staff Masking
 Facemask
 Face Coverings
 COVID-19 Pandemic

See Also

Distribution and Use
 of Personal
 Protective Equipment
 by Hospital Staff
 During COVID-19
 Pandemic #1-12-92

POLICY

As a component of standard preventive measures to decrease the risk of spread of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19 infection), all individuals entering Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania or affiliated clinical practices are required to wear cloth face coverings or a medical grade surgical mask (i.e., facemask).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the expectations for use of cloth face coverings or facemasks, and to provide guidance on the implementation of this expectation across the hospital.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP), and those parts of the Clinical Practices of the University of Pennsylvania (CPUP) which practice at or in conjunction with HUP, operating under the HUP license. This policy also applies to: (i) those practices and sites that are off campus facilities or departments of HUP and operating under its license, including e.g. HUP’s inpatient rehabilitation unit; (ii) private entities that lease space in property owned or leased by HUP only if they provide contracted clinical services to HUP; and (iii) personnel that provide contracted clinical services to HUP patients.

DEFINITIONS

- **Hospital Staff:** Includes but is not limited to medical staff, nursing staff, and employees or contractors that provide therapeutic services, social services, housekeeping services, dietary services, and maintenance.
- **Cloth face covering:** Textile (cloth) covers that are intended to keep the person wearing one from spreading respiratory secretions when talking, sneezing, or coughing.

Supersedes: NEW Patient Visitor Staff Mask Policy COVID-19 Pandemic #1-12-93 FINAL 15Jun20.docx	Issued by: <u>/s/ Regina Cunningham, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN</u> Chief Executive Officer, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania
	Issued by: <u>/s/ Deborah Driscoll, MD</u> Senior Vice President, Clinical Practices of the University of Pennsylvania

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- **Facemask:** Facemasks are a type of personal protective equipment (PPE) and are often referred to as surgical masks or procedure masks.
- **Mask:** Includes face mask and cloth face covering unless specifically noted otherwise.

PROCEDURE IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

Inclusions

All patients (not identified in the exclusion criteria below), all visitors and Hospital Staff must wear a cloth face covering or facemask while inside a Hospital facility unless an exception applies. All patients, visitors, and Hospital Staff are encouraged to bring their own mask for use upon entering any Hospital facility. If they do not have their own cloth face covering or facemask, they will be provided one upon arrival. All Hospital Staff are required to wear a facemask when in any patient care areas.

Management has discretion to require replacement of a mask that is inconsistent with this policy or other Hospital policy.

Facemasks are to be used according to product labeling and local, state, and federal requirements. FDA-cleared surgical masks are designed to protect against splashes and sprays and are prioritized for use when such exposures are anticipated, including surgical procedures. Facemasks that are not regulated by FDA, such as some procedure masks, which are typically used for isolation purposes, may not provide protection against splashes and sprays. Plexiglas face shields are an alternate form of eye wear but are not considered Masks.

Exclusions

Masks are required of all persons entering the facility unless it would create a further risk of if the person is under 2 years old.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines identify the following populations as potentially eligible for an exception:

1. Children younger than 2 years of age;
2. Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated;
3. Anyone who has difficulty breathing;
4. Any person who is physically unable to remove the mask without assistance;
5. Other special consideration may be given to patients who have medical or behavioral health conditions requiring special accommodations such as patients with hearing loss or severe psychological impairment.

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IMPLEMENTATION FOR PATIENTS

Admitted Patients

- Admitted patients will arrive to their admitting unit with their mask from home (can be any type of mask as long as it covers their nose and mouth), or the one provided to them at the time of admission/registration. Hospital Staff will direct patients to keep this item throughout their length of stay for later use.
- All admitted patients will be required to wear their mask when out of their rooms (during transport, while being discharged, on walks outside of their room, etc.) Patients may wear their mask from home if deemed clinically appropriate, or the mask issued to them at the time of admission/registration.
- Inpatients are not required to wear their mask while inside their rooms.
- Inpatients will be informed that Hospital Staff may request that the patient put on their mask, when the Hospital Staff enters the room.
- Inpatients should keep their mask in a convenient location in their rooms when not in use.
 - They are not required to keep their face coverings in a paper bag, but one will be provided to them if they request one.
- COVID-19 positive or suspected patients may have additional requirements for masking.

Ambulatory and Emergency Department Patients

- Patients entering ambulatory facilities and practices for an in-person visit or procedure are encouraged to bring their own cloth face covering or facemask from home. Otherwise they will be provided one upon arrival.
- Outpatient/ambulatory patients are required to wear their cloth face coverings or facemasks for the duration of their time in the facility.

IMPLEMENTATION FOR VISITORS, COMPANIONS, GUESTS, VENDORS

All visitors, vendors and guest must wear a mask unless an exception applies as stated above. All visitors to Hospital inpatient and ambulatory facilities are encouraged to wear their own personal cloth face covering or mask. If they arrive without one, they will be provided one to wear during their visit. The Hospital's Visitation policy (including during COVID-19) must be followed.

IMPLEMENTATION FOR HOSPITAL STAFF

- All Hospital Staff are required to wear masks (cloth or facemask) upon entry to any Hospital facility even if they will be donning a facemask upon arrival to their work station.
 - Hospital Staff who wear a cloth face covering for their commute, upon arrival must switch to a facemask as soon as possible.

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- Facemasks are required for all Hospital Staff while working in, or visiting patient care areas.
- Cloth face coverings are permitted for Hospital Staff who work in sequestered, non-patient-facing areas, such as (but not limited to):
 - Administrative suites
 - Billing offices
 - Information Technology (IT) departments or facilities
- Areas or departments that are unsure if cloth face coverings are appropriate should contact their local Infection Control office for guidance.
- Social distancing of at least 6 feet should be maintained even when wearing any face covering.
- Masks may be removed when in an office space while alone, but care should still be taken not to touch your face, and frequent hand hygiene should continue.
- Hospital Staff who wear cloth face coverings must don a facemask when visiting patient care areas.
- For Hospital Staff who experience dermatologic reactions to facemasks, a cloth face covering may be worn *underneath* a facemask.
- Cloth face coverings are not permitted in dedicated COVID care areas, or when evaluating a Person Under Investigation for COVID, even if worn under a facemask. Follow the Use of PPE Protections from COVID-19 for such encounters.
- Cloth face coverings must be laundered regularly at home in hot water using standard detergent.
- Physical integrity of the cloth face covering should be checked daily by the user.
- Cloth face coverings shall not display language or images that are offensive or inconsistent with the Hospital dress code policy.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL REFUSES TO WEAR A CLOTH FACE COVERING OR FACEMASK

If someone entering the facility refuses to wear a face covering, it should be explained that cloth face coverings or facemasks are worn to protect others from spread of infection and are not intended to protect the individual. It should also be explained that Pennsylvania requires that masks are necessary when entering hospital facilities.

If someone presents at an entry location without a mask and is offered one but refuses to wear it, every attempt should be made to resolve the situation amicably. If there is a persistent refusal, follow guidance as outlined below.

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For Patients

Ask the individual why they do not want to wear a mask?

- **The Patient Identifies Potential Medical Conditions as Reason for Not Wearing Face Covering:**
 - Allergy to the mask:
 - If the patient states that it is due to an allergy to the facemask, offer them an alternative cloth face covering (if available).
 - Allow the patient to keep that face covering.
 - If the patient declines, then suggest the patient schedule a telehealth visit or speak with their care provider.
 - If the patient states that they have a medical condition that keeps them from wearing a mask, **do not ask the patient the nature of their medical condition**, and offer the cloth face covering as an option (if available):
 - If the patient refuses this option, and refuses to leave, escort the patient to an exam room or consult room and call security (if available) and/or a practice manager.
 - If the patient is persistent and refuses all other interventions, then they may proceed to their end point location directly. The receiving area should immediately be informed the patient is unmasked due to a medical condition.
 - **Other Reasons for Declining Face Coverings:**
 - If the patient states that they will not wear the mask due to “constitutional rights” or “refusal on principle” (i.e., for no stated medical reason), then the patient should be told that they cannot enter the facility unless they are here for emergency services (Emergency Department only).
 - The patient should be offered the option of scheduling a telehealth visit.
 - If the patient refuses this option, and refuses to leave, call security (if available) and/or a practice manager.

For Visitors, Companions, Guests, Vendors

If any person other than the patient refuses to wear the mask for any reason, then they will be informed that they cannot enter the facility. If the person is a visitor or companion, inform them that the patient can proceed to the department location, but the visitor must exit the facility and wait to be contacted. Follow the Hospital’s Visitation policy (including for COVID-19) for any exceptions.

For Hospital Staff

- As outlined above, Hospital Staff are expected to wear a mask while at work, including upon entering the facility, and refusal to do so may result in disciplinary action.

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- A Hospital Staff who refuses to wear a mask upon entering the facility should be advised that they will not be permitted to enter and should be told to contact their supervisor or Human Resources.
- Hospital Staff who cannot wear a mask for medical or religious reasons may request an accommodation through their local Human Resources department, and those requests will be considered in accordance with Hospital or Penn Medicine policy.

REFERENCES

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-faq.html>
[Pennsylvania Department of Health Secretary Order Regarding Hospital Staff Protection dated June 9, 2020](#)

Policy owner

Director of Infection Control

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