

Universal Use of Facemasks

Purpose: Masking all Health Care Personnel (HCP) when PPE is otherwise not indicated can help protect HCP from pre-symptomatic transmission of COVID-19 in the healthcare setting. Universal masking can also prevent pre-symptomatic HCP from transmitting the virus to other HCP and patients.

Policy: Westview Health Care Center employees are to wear a mask:

1. At all times in the patient care area.
2. In non-patient care areas when 6 feet social distancing is not feasible (shared office space, work requiring close proximity with no options for engineering controls)

Health Care Personnel (HCP) who provide direct patient care are to wear a medical-grade/FDA-regulated surgical/procedure mask, and follow CDC recommendations for extended use and re-use.

Those who do not provide direct patient care are to wear a cloth mask to conserve procedure masks for direct patient care. At this time Westview Health Care Center requests employees wear cloth masks provided by and laundered by the facility.

Procedure: After completing a symptom screen and temperature check, each HCP will be issued one facemask (either medical-grade or cloth dependent on position). The HCP should perform hand hygiene and don the mask prior to the start of their shift. After donning the mask HCP must take care not to touch their face or the outside of their mask. If HCP must touch or adjust their mask, hand hygiene must be performed before and after adjusting the mask.

The issued facemask should be used for the duration of the HCP's shift; however, the facemask should be removed and discarded if soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through at which point the HCP must see their supervisor to be issued a new mask.

HCP must leave the patient care area if they need to remove the facemask. The following steps should be followed (note that pulling your facemask below your chin when not in use is not appropriate and increases your risk of contamination):

1. Perform hand hygiene.
2. Place a clean paper towel down on a clean surface
3. Remove the facemask by grabbing the ties, pull the mask out and away from your face and uniform
4. Once removed, taking care to touch only the edges and minimally touching the outside surface, carefully fold the facemask so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage.
5. Place the folded mask on the clean paper towel
6. Perform hand hygiene.
7. Fold the paper towel over the mask to protect it from contamination while not being worn.
8. The mask may now be stored in a clean pocket, locker, or drawer.

Medical-grade/FDA-regulated surgical masks:

Medical-grade/FDA-regulated surgical/procedure masks are to be prioritized for HCP providing direct patient care. This includes nursing, therapy, and recreational therapy staff. At the end of the shift the mask is to be discarded in the trash after exiting the patient care area just prior to exiting the building.

Cloth Face Masks:

Cloth Face Masks are to be used by all other health care personnel that do not provide direct care. This includes housekeeping, maintenance, dietary, support services, office staff, etc. At the end of the shift the mask is to be discarded in a designated laundry hamper after exiting the patient care area and just prior to exiting the building.

Facemask use in Transmission based (isolation) rooms:

Transmission based precautions should be followed per policy and procedure with the following guidance:

Contact Precautions

The HCP does not need to change facemasks (medical-grade or cloth) prior to or upon exiting a contact precautions room unless the mask becomes wet, soiled, or difficult to breath through.

Droplet Precautions

Medical-grade face masks are required to enter droplet precaution rooms.

If the HCP is already wearing medical-grade face masks they do not need to change their mask prior to entering the room. Upon exiting the room the HCP should discard the old facemask and don a new one.

If the HCP is wearing a cloth facemask, they should remove and store the cloth facemask according to Policy and Procedure and don a medical-grade face mask to enter the room. Upon exiting the room the HCP should discard the medical-grade face mask, and re-don their cloth facemask.

***Changing masks for droplet precautions rooms is the only exception in which facemask may be removed in the patient care area. HCP should change facemasks 6 feet away from any patients or other HCP and should do so as timely as possible.