

Extended Use of Masks & N95 Respirators

April 15th, 2020

In an effort to preserve our supply of masks and respirators, LHSC is using extended use as a conservation technique. **Extended Use** means using a mask/respirator for repeated close contact encounters with several patients without removing between encounters.

This means we are expecting staff to wear the same mask/N95 between many patients or until they go for break or lunch. Depending upon break schedules, this typically requires up to 4 masks/respirators per shift. Area leaders should determine how the masks/respirators given out will be kept clean if issuing more than one mask/respirator at a time, e.g. provide paper bags/containers.

Note: The COVID -19 precautions are droplet/contact, and enhanced PPE (N95) for Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMP). A face shield is recommended to protect your mask or your N95 while caring for these patients.

Basic *Extended Use* Principles

- A surgical mask or N95 can be used over the course of many patients during one shift, regardless of precautions
- A mask can be worn for as long as possible, but once wet, damaged, or visibly soiled, it must be discarded (garbage)
- An N95 respirator can be worn for as long as possible, but once wet, damaged, visibly soiled, no longer maintains its fit, or difficult to breathe through, it must be discarded (garbage)
- Do not touch the front of the mask/N95, if you do, immediately perform hand hygiene
- Always take adequate time when removing a mask/N95 to prevent self-contamination

Procedure

Ensure diligent hand hygiene practices when donning and doffing a mask or N95 for extended use.

DOFFING OF PPE

1. If leaving a care area that has a patient on additional precautions (i.e. Droplet+Contact)
 - a. Doff all PPE except mask and face shield at the exit to this space
 - b. Perform hand hygiene
 - c. Exit room while wearing the mask and face shield
 - i. If wearing separate mask and face shield, remove face shield from the back of the head and discard (garbage). Keep on the mask. Perform hand hygiene.
 - ii. If wearing one-piece mask and face shield, keep on.
2. When removing your mask or N95 for a break or lunch;
 - a. Perform hand hygiene
 - b. Remove the mask, using straps/elastic from the back
 - i. Masks are to be disposed of in a collection bin for potential reprocessing
 - ii. N95s are to be disposed of in a collection bin for potential reprocessing
 - c. Perform hand hygiene
 - d. Ensure to practice physical distancing and keep two meters away from everyone to keep yourself safe.

When you go back to your clinical area you are to don a fresh mask or N95 based upon your Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA).

If your N95 was not protected by a face shield when doing an AGMP, it must be discarded and replaced.

As per Directive Number 5, if at any time after you perform your PCRA, you determine that you require new PPE, you should doff and don new PPE using the proper process.