

Face Masks and N95 Respirators



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Protecting and Improving the Health of Iowans



Summary of New Guidance

- CDC continues to recommend universal use of well-fitting source control for everyone in a healthcare setting. Healthcare personnel options for source control include:
 - N95 respirators or equivalent or high-level respirators
 - A respirator approved under standards used in other countries that are similar to NIOSH-approved N95 filtering facepiece respirators
 - A well-fitting facemask

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html?ACSTrackingID=USCDC_425-DM48901&ACSTrackingLabel=Weekly%20Summary%3A%20COVID-19%20Healthcare%20Quality%20and%20Worker%20Safety%20Information%20%E2%80%93%20February%2016%2C%202021&deliveryName=USCDC_425-DM48901

Source Control vs. PPE

In healthcare settings, facemasks are used by HCP for 2 general purposes

- As PPE to protect their nose and mouth from exposure to splashes, sprays, splatter, and respiratory secretions (e.g., for patients on Droplet Precautions).
- As source control to cover one's mouth and nose to prevent the spread of respiratory secretions produced by the wearer.

Source Control and Masks

- CDC continues to recommend universal use of well-fitting source control for everyone in a healthcare setting.
- Ensuring a proper fit is important to optimize both the source control and protection offered.
- To reduce the number of times HCP must touch their face and potential risk for self-contamination, when used for source control, HCP should consider continuing to wear the same respirator or well-fitting facemask (extended use) throughout their entire work shift.

Masks and Source Control

- When a mask is used for this purpose, it may be used until it becomes damaged, soiled, or hard to breathe through, or the end of the workday.
- Perform hand hygiene immediately after touching, donning, or doffing a potentially contaminated mask.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html#useppe>

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html?ACSTrackingID=USCDC_425-DM48901&ACSTrackingLabel=Weekly%20Summary%3A%20COVID-19%20Healthcare%20Quality%20and%20Worker%20Safety%20Information%20%E2%80%93%20February%2016%2C%202021&deliveryName=USCDC_425-DM48901

Masks Used As PPE

- Used for Transmission-Based Precautions and Standard Precautions.
- If no respirator is available, a well-fitting mask may worn (in addition to gown, gloves, and eye protection) when caring for residents with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection.
- If no respirator is available, a well-fitting mask may be worn (in addition to gown, gloves, and eye protection) when performing aerosol-generating procedures on residents with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection, or unknown COVID-19 infection status.
- If no respirator is available, a well-fitting mask may be worn (in addition to gown, gloves, and eye protection) when caring for residents in quarantine, or when COVID-19 status is unknown.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/transmission-based-precautions.html>

Conventional Capacity Strategy

Use of facemasks according to product labeling and local, state, and federal requirements

- When used as PPE, facemasks should be discarded after each resident encounter.
- When used for source control, facemasks may be used until they become soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through. They should be discarded at the end of the work day.

Contingency Capacity Strategy

Extended use of facemasks as PPE

- The practice of wearing the same facemask (as PPE) during encounters with several different residents without removing it.
- Remove and discard mask if it becomes soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through.
- Discard when removed at the end of the workday.

Crisis Capacity Strategy

Implement limited re-use of facemasks with extended use

- Reuse is the practice of removing the facemask and redonning it for further use
- Pairing limited re-use of facemasks with extended use is the practice of using the same facemask by one HCP for multiple resident encounters but removing it after several encounters and redonning it for further resident encounters.
- Facemasks should be carefully folded so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage. The folded mask can be stored between uses in a clean sealable paper bag or breathable container.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html#contingency-capacity>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html#conventional-capacity>

Improving the Fit of Your Mask

- Knotting the ear loops and tucking the ends can improve the fit of a mask.
- This can improve source control and reduce exposure risk.
- CDC MMWR Release February 10, 2021



<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/mask-fit-and-filtration.html#improve-fit>
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7007e1.htm#F1> down