



Type: Clinical Procedures
Subsection: I- Infection Control
Authority: Executive Director with Medical Director
Related Documents:

Preamble

Face masks are intended to be worn by health professionals during healthcare procedures. It is designed to prevent infections in residents and treating personnel by catching bacteria shed in liquid droplets and aerosols from the wearer's mouth and nose. They are not designed to protect the wearer from breathing airborne bacteria or viruses where particles are smaller.

During an outbreak, health departments may also recommend that members of the public wear disposable masks to protect themselves.

Disposable masks vary by quality and levels of protection. They are designed to completely cover both your mouth and nose.

Policy

It is the policy of Residential Hospice Grey Bruce, that all staff take the necessary steps possible to prevent the spread of infection.

During a disease outbreak it is also important to note that all public visitors will be requested to wear a surgical mask when visiting at Residential Hospice Grey Bruce.

I-03.01 Putting on a Mask

1. Clean your hands. Before touching a clean disposable mask, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
2. Check the disposable mask for defects. Once you have taken a new (unused) disposable mask from the box, check in to ensure that it does not contain any defects, holes, or tears in the material. If the mask has defects, holes, or tears, throw it away and select another new (unused) ask from the box.
3. Orient the top of the mask. For the mask to fit as close to your skin as possible, the top portion of the mask will have a bendable, but stiff, edge that can be molded around your nose. Ensure this bendable side is facing upwards before applying the mask to your face.
4. Ensure the proper side of the mask faces outwards. The inside of most disposable masks are white in color while, the outside has a color of some sort. Before applying the mask to your face, ensure that the white side of the mask is facing towards your face.
5. Place the mask on your face. There are many types of disposable masks available, each with different methods of attaching the mask to your head.

- 5.1. *Ear Loops* – Some masks have 2 ear loops on either side of the mask. These loops are normally made of an elastic material so they can be stretched. Pick up this type of mask by the loops, put 1 loop around one ear and then put the other loop around your other ear.
- 5.2. *Ties or Straps* – Some masks come with pieces of fabric that are tied around the back of your head. Most masks with ties come with upper and lower ties or straps. Pick up the mask by the upper ties, place the ties around the back of your head and attach them together with a bow.
- 5.3. *Bands* – Some masks come with 2 elastic bands that are placed over and around the back of your head (as opposed to around your ears). Hold the mask in front of your face, pull the top band over the top of your head and place it around the crown of your head. Then pull the bottom band over the top of your head and place it at the base of your skull.
6. Adjust the nose piece. Now that the medical mask is in place on your head and face, use your index finger and thumb to pinch the bendable portion of the top edge of the mask around the bridge of your nose.
7. Tie the lower band of the mask if needed. If you are using a mask with bands that ties on the top and bottom, you can now tie the bottom band around the base of your skull. Adjusting the bendable nose piece can impact the fit of the mask, therefore, it is best to wait until after the nose piece is in place before tying the bottom straps.
8. Fit the mask to your face and under your chin. Once the mask is completely secured, adjust it to ensure it covers your face and mouth, ensuring the bottom edge is under your chin.

I-03.02 Tearing Off a Mask

1. Clean your hands. Depending on what you were doing with your hands before you remove your mask, you may need to wash your hands.
2. Remove the mask carefully. In general, remove the mask by only touching the edges, straps, loops, ties, or bands. Do not touch the front portion of the mask which may be contaminated.
 - 2.1. *Ear Loops* – Use your hand to hold the ear loops and remove them from around each ear.
 - 2.2. *Ties or Straps* – Use your hands to untie the bottom straps first, then untie the top straps. Remove the mask while holding onto the top ties.
 - 2.3. *Bands* – Use your hands to bring the bottom elastic band up and over your head, then use your other hand to do the same with the top elastic band. Remove the mask from your face while holding the top elastic band.
3. Dispose of your mask safely. Disposable masks are designed to only be used once and discarded, except during a pandemic when there is a shortage of PPE. Disposable masks are to be worn ensuring the integrity of the mask is in place.
4. In medical settings there is most likely a garbage bin specifically for biohazardous items like used masks.
5. In non-medical settings where the mask could be contaminated, place the mask by itself inside a plastic bag. Tie the plastic bag closed then throw the plastic bag in the garbage bin.
6. Wash your hands again. Once you have disposed of the mask safely, wash your hands once more to ensure they are clean and did not become contaminated by touching the dirty mask.

I-03.04 Review Cycle

Clinical Policies shall be reviewed in the odd year.

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