



This guidance will be active as of August 24, 2020.

The COVID Clinical Response Committee (CCRC) will provide guidance on mandatory mask use by visitors and patients in response to local by-law implementation.

1. All patients and visitors are required to wear hospital-issued face masks while in the hospital.
2. If an outpatient is unable or refuses to wear a hospital-issued-mask and requires essential services, they will receive education, a sticker indicating “No Mask” and a porter as further escort.
3. If a visitor is unable or refuses to wear a hospital-issued mask, they will not be allowed to visit. In this scenario, the visitor may proactively utilize the existing appeals process through the Patient Experience Office, and if required via exception, the visitor will be issued a sticker including “No Mask”.
4. Emergency department patients and outpatients who are unable or refuse to wear a mask will be isolated in a single room, where and when possible. For patients in this scenario, the Most Responsible Physician (MRP) will assess the patient expeditiously in an effort to minimize risk associated with a prolonged stay in hospital.
5. Patients are not required to wear a mask while in a private room or if they are appropriately physically distanced from other patients. When someone enters the room, the patient(s) will be asked to don a mask for interactions that require close physical contact for more than a brief encounter. Staff may assist a patient who is unable to don/doff a mask if needed or requested for the duration of the contact.
6. Patients should be provided with a mask daily or when visibly soiled.
7. Patients who cannot take a mask off without assistance must not be left alone with a mask in place. The mask must be removed before the staff member leaves the room.
8. Patients are not required to wear a mask while sleeping.
9. Patients who leave their assigned room must wear a mask.
10. If a patient refuses to wear a mask, the patient must remain in their room.
11. Where possible, standard provincial signage should be implemented throughout the hospital, including inpatient areas. This signage will be located at all entrances and in all departments.
12. If the patient refuses to comply with mask wear or physical distancing (remaining in their room), the manager / Access and Flow and MRP should be notified to help problem-solve.
13. Kindness and compassion must be employed when approaching others who are not wearing a mask.
14. Critically ill patients can be offered a medical mask but are not required to wear a mask.
15. Best efforts will be made to align with these guidelines within the following service areas: Mental Health Intensive
16. Patients in active labour should be offered a medical mask but not required to wear one during the active phase of labour.
17. Patients under under two years of age are not required to wear a mask.

This decision will be revisited as required.

Rationale

1. Current local bylaws require all residents to wear masks in indoor spaces.
2. There is evidence that facial coverings reduce the spread of COVID-19.
3. There are very rare medical contraindications to appropriate mask wear.
4. The Public Health Agency of Canada Non-medical does not recommend non-medical mask use for patients under age 2, those who take them off without assistance, or those with trouble breathing. Those with difficulty breathing in the hospital can often safely wear medical masks.
5. Hospital-issued face masks in clinical areas provide for consistent messaging and protection.

References

1. [American College of Chest Physicians Statement on the Importance of Patients with Chronic Lung Disease Wearing Face Masks \(2020\)](#).
2. [The Public Health Agency of Canada Recommendations on Non-Medical Mask Use](#).
3. [Region of Peel Mask Bylaw Summaries](#)
4. Bylaws: [City of Toronto Public Bylaw](#), [City of Brampton Public Bylaw](#), [Town of Caledon Public Bylaw](#)