

The COVID Clinical Response Committee (CCRC) has been asked to comment on the process for personal protective equipment in patients who have a chronic tracheostomy.

1. **We recommend cohorting patients with a tracheostomy to the maximum extent possible.**
2. **We recommend against allowing nurses who care for patients with a chronic tracheostomy (above 30 days for this document) to care for patients with COVID-19 infection where possible.**
3. **We recommend one-time surveillance nasopharyngeal swab on April 7 from all patients who have an in situ tracheostomy with a stay above 30 days with no change in isolation requirements.**
4. **We recommend droplet/contact precautions for care of all patients with tracheostomy in situ unless a COVID-19 swab or aspirate is pending or positive.**
5. **Where possible, curtains should be drawn around the bedside for open tracheal suctioning.**
6. **In the event of fever (temperature above 38 degrees), we recommend placing the patient in airborne precautions and repeating the surveillance swab/aspirate.**

This recommendation will be revisited in the event new evidence is raised on this topic.

IMT Report Date - April 9

Rationale

1. There is little to no evidence to guide our recommendations here.
2. Patients with tracheostomy in situ will be a significantly elevated risk of adverse outcomes if infected with COVID-19.
3. This procedure will reduce the need for use of N95 masks for suctioning, as patients will be identified as not having COVID-19.
4. The need for open airway suctioning presents a risk to staff if the patient was to become infected with COVID-19.
5. In the absence of visitors, these patients are at reduced risk for contracting COVID-19. Provided the baseline endotracheal aspirate is negative for COVID-19.
6. By limiting staff who work in units who care for these patients to non-COVID related care where possible, this likely reduces the chance for transmission by an indeterminable amount.
7. Excellent hand hygiene will further protect this patient population.
8. The hospital mask policy aims to enhance protection to patients as well.