

INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL COVID-19 COMMITTEE

Bulletin #88b – COVID-19 – ID-IPC – Infection Prevention and Control Guidance – Nov 25 2020

Face mask for health care workers use during COVID-19

The Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Guidance: [Face Mask for Healthcare Workers Use During COVID-19](#) provides detailed face mask information on the following:

- The type of face masks available within Horizon facilities;
- Testing standards;
- Indications for face mask use;
- Level of masks required to be worn by health care workers (HCWs); and
- [Ordering information](#).

IPC is working in collaboration with Horizon Logistics and Service New Brunswick to standardize the types of medical grade face masks provided to HCWs.

This process is being implemented to ensure:

- Proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is used by HCWs for all procedures (COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related);
- Appropriate face masks for patients and visitors are provided; and
- Health Canada specifications for COVID-19 products are being met.

All department / services / units will be provided with the ordering information outlining the face masks for use within their area. Each department must order the appropriate Meditech item number for their staff upon receipt of that information.

Logistics is reviewing current inventory of medical grade face masks and adjusting stock as necessary on departments / services / units. For facilities who do not have logistics staff in their buildings, any masks on hand that are not one of the standardized products listed, should be returned to your local stores department. This can be done through your normal procedure for returning product.

Horizon's supply of non-medical grade face masks will be restricted for use by outpatients / visitors at the Emergency Department, and main entrances at all facilities.

Symptom-based strategy for discontinuing IPC precautions for persons with COVID-19

The following clinical recommendations for discontinuing transmission-based precautions for persons with COVID-19 have been made by the Infectious Disease and Infection Prevention and Control (ID-IPC) Committee, and approved by the Regional Emergency Operations committee.

Accumulating evidence supports the following symptom-based Strategy for discontinuation of isolation precautions. This approach aligns with the CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Duration of Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19*.

1. Time based – for most persons with COVID-19, 14 days following symptom onset or 21 days for patients with critical illness or severely immunocompromised.¹
2. Symptom(s) – resolution of fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, and with improvement or stability of other symptoms
3. For asymptomatic persons isolation precautions can be discontinued 14 days after the date of the first positive COVID-19 PCR test.
4. COVID-19 Swab – A Test based strategy is no longer recommended for discontinuing Transmission-Based Precautions.
5. Consult Infection Prevention and Control who will work with Infectious Diseases/Medical Microbiologist, to determine the best course of action.

Note: Meeting criteria for discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions is not a prerequisite for discharge from a healthcare facility. Notify local Area Public Health prior to patient's discharge.

¹*The studies used to inform this guidance did not clearly define "severely immunocompromised." For the purposes of this guidance, CDC used the following definition:*

- *Some conditions, such as being on chemotherapy for cancer, being within one year out from receiving a hematopoietic stem cell or solid organ transplant, untreated HIV infection with CD4 T lymphocyte count < 200, combined primary immunodeficiency disorder, and receipt of prednisone >20mg/day for more than 14 days, may cause a higher degree of immunocompromise and inform decisions regarding the duration of Transmission-Based Precautions.*

- *Other factors, such as advanced age, diabetes mellitus, or end-stage renal disease, may pose a much lower degree of immunocompromise and not clearly affect decisions about duration of Transmission-Based Precautions.*
- *Ultimately, the degree of immunocompromise for the patient is determined by the treating provider, and preventive actions are tailored to each individual and situation.*

References:

Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Disposition of Patients with COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings (Interim Guidance) Updated Aug. 10, 2020.

Duration of Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19: Duration of Isolation & Precautions for Adults. Updated Oct. 19, 2020.