

INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL COVID-19 COMMITTEE

**Bulletin #190b – COVID-19 - Interim Enhanced Precautionary Guidance for Use of PPE –
Jan 13 2022**

**COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Guidance on Personal Protective
Equipment**

**1. GNB Memo re. Interim COVID-19 Enhanced Precautionary Guidance for Use of
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Attached is a memo from Dr. Jennifer Russell, the province's Chief Medical Officer of Health, providing an update on the interim [Revised COVID-19 Enhanced Precautionary Guidance for Use of Personal Protective Equipment](#) in response to the Omicron variant and the continued high number of cases in the province. This memo was also shared earlier today as a Special Bulletin.

The memo reinforces that all health care workers must perform a point of care risk assessment before every patient interaction to determine the most suitable respiratory protection and notes that a well fitted medical grade face masks remains an appropriate level of PPE for the care of a suspect / confirmed COVID-19 patient.

This memo provides clarification on the use of N95 respirators and advises that a N95 respirator is required:

- for all HCWs who are providing care or must enter the room of a suspect/confirmed COVID-19 patient when an Aerosol Generating Medical Procedure is performed
- for all clinical or non-clinical HCWs while caring (entering the room/bed space or are within two meters of a patient) for suspect/ confirmed COVID-19 patient if they determine there is a significant risk of transmission when all elements of controls have been addressed as best as possible
- for all clinical or non-clinical HCWs in settings where frequent or unexpected exposure to AGMPs is anticipated (e.g. critical care units, emergency departments), or where there is a high density of COVID-19 patients (e.g. COVID-19 unit, uncontrolled COVID-19 outbreaks).

2. Continuous Use of Eye Protection

With the level of exposure to Omicron variant in the community and transmission between HCWs, the continuous use of eye protection is now mandatory at all times for all healthcare workers in all clinical settings. The continuous use of eye protection is optional for HCWs working in non-clinical settings.

NOTE: Eye Protection has been shown to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection by 40-90%.

Clinical Settings

- All HCWs working in high-risk clinical settings (i.e. COVID-19 units, ERs, All ICUs, ORs, and COVID-19 Assessment Centres) will wear facial protection N95 respirator/ well fitted medical grade face mask and eye protection (goggles/face shield) continuously, at all times in all areas of their workplace when a physical barrier (i.e., plexiglass) is not in place to prevent transmission of droplets
- All HCWs will wear facial protection N95 respirator/well fitted medical grade face mask and eye protection (goggles/face shield) when providing care to suspect/confirmed COVID-19 patients.
- All HCWs working in non-high risk clinical settings will wear facial protection N95 respirator/ well fitted medical grade face mask and eye protection (safety glasses) continuously, at all times in all areas of their workplace when a physical barrier (i.e., plexiglass) is not in place to prevent transmission of droplets.

Continuous use of N95 respirator / well fitted medical grade face mask and eye protection is not required when HCWs:

- are in individual workstations
- are in offices
- are eating and drinking with physical distancing maintained
- have received special dispensation through Employee Health Services under duty to accommodate or workplace safety issues are identified.
- are entering and exiting the facility when only a medical grade face mask is required to be worn.