

## INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL COMMITTEE

**Bulletin #36 – COVID-19 – ID-IPC Questions and Answers – May 5, 2020**

### **Discontinuation of Isolation for confirmed COVID-19 inpatient**

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The criteria for discontinuation of isolation for confirmed COVID-19 inpatients are as follows:

- At least 14 days have passed since the onset of the acute disease (CIDRAP, 2020);
- No fever for 48 hours;
- No acute symptoms for 24 hours;
- A negative PCR result from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swabs (or according to Public Health's recommendations) collected 24 hours apart after resolution of the acute disease (e.g. the patient becomes asymptomatic 14 days after the onset of symptoms).

**When isolation has been discontinued on a confirmed COVID-19 inpatient can this patient be transferred off the COVID-19 unit?**

When isolation has been discontinued as per the current criteria, these patients should be transferred off the COVID-19 Unit to another unit or facility with no restrictions.

### **Use of Surgical Masks to Cover Nasal Cannula**

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**Should a surgical mask be placed over a nasal cannula?**

Due to limited information and misalignment with Public Health Agency of Canada guidelines, the practice of applying a surgical mask over a nasal cannula used for the administration of oxygen therapy on a COVID-19 patient is not supported.

### **Negative Swab Results**

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**How long can negative swab results be considered up-to-date?**

The test result reflects the COVID-19 status of the patient at the time it was obtained. Retesting is only required if the patient's clinical condition worsens, there is a known risk of exposure or upon further expansion of testing criteria.

### **Requirement to Change Uniforms**

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**Are Healthcare Workers (HCWs) required to change their uniform if they are on the COVID-19 Unit for a short period of time?**

HCWs will need to change their uniform if they work in a COVID-19 unit for a prolonged period of time. HCWs who work in the unit intermittently during their shift, will continue to follow appropriate isolation precautions and personal protective equipment will be doffed prior to leaving the COVID-19 unit.

## **Cloth Head Coverings**

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### **When can an HCW wear a head covering?**

As per the [Horizon Dress Code Policy](#), head coverings are permitted to be worn when required by infection control, safety policies, and religious affiliation. A department's practice standards outline if head coverings are required such as Surgery, Medical Device Reprocessing and Food Services.

### **If a head covering is required, can it be a homemade cloth covering?**

If an HCW is required to wear a head covering, it must be a hospital grade head covering and not a homemade head covering.

### **Is a bouffant an appropriate head covering when treating a COVID-19 patient?**

A bouffant is not part of the recommended personal protective equipment for Droplet/Contact Precautions for the management of COVID -19 patients, as outlined in the Public Health Agency of Canada Guidelines.

### **How can I protect myself if I am unable to wear a cloth head covering, exposing my hair to contamination?**

HCWs are advised to tie back long hair before reporting to work and during work. This is reflected in Horizon's ["COVID -19 Tips for Staying Safe"](#) poster.