

Universal Masking Policy at HDS

Information for patients and their Essential Care Partners

What is a Universal Masking Policy?

Everyone must wear a mask while inside the hospital. This includes:

- patients coming to the hospital for appointments, treatment or services (outpatients)
- patients staying in the hospital overnight (inpatients)
- pre-approved Essential Care Partners (a person who is at the hospital to support a patient)
- Security, contractors and delivery persons
- HDS staff and physicians

Exceptions may apply for patients with medical conditions that prevent them from wearing a mask. The exception must be approved by IPAC at HDS.

Why was this policy created?

COVID-19 can be spread by people who do not have any symptoms (asymptomatic spread). This is why we are requiring everyone at HDS to wear a medical mask, even if they do not have any symptoms.

What if I can't or don't want to wear a mask?

All outpatients and pre-approved Essential Care Partners **must** wear a mask while inside the hospital. Inpatients, when able, **must** wear a mask when leaving their room for any reason. This is to protect all patients, Essential Care Partners and staff and physicians in the hospital.

- **For patients with a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask:** Please consult IPAC at HDS for further discussion.

Can I wear my own cloth mask or face covering while in the hospital?

No. Entrance screening staff will give you a medical mask when you arrive at the hospital. They will explain how to put it on properly.

- **If you are wearing a reusable mask or face covering when you arrive at the hospital:** Bring a plastic bag to store your reusable mask while at the hospital. Wash your reusable mask when you get home.
- **Do not** wear bandanas, neck gaiters or masks with exhale vents inside the hospital. They do not stop germs from spreading to others.

Entrance screening staff will give you a medical mask each day.

How do I wear a medical mask?

- Your medical mask should always cover your nose, mouth and chin.
- The medical mask ear loops or ties should be attached properly.
- The medical mask must not have any tears, holes or vents. Ask your health care team for a new mask if your mask gets wet, dirty or torn while in the hospital.
- Avoid touching or adjusting your mask while you are wearing it.
- Clean your hands before and after putting on or taking off your mask.

The website below is information from Public Health Ontario:

www.publichealthontario.ca/en/search#g=wearing%20masks%20mandatory&sort=relevancy