

Personal Protective Equipment – Using Face Masks

Purpose	To guide the use of masks.
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To prevent transmission of infectious agents through the air;2. To protect the wearer from inhaling droplets;3. To prevent transmission of some infections that are spread by direct contact with mucous membranes;4. To prevent the splashing of blood or body fluids into the mouth or nose; and5. To prevent exposure to the HIV (AIDS) and hepatitis B viruses from blood or body fluids.
Equipment and Supplies	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. High-efficiency disposable masks; or2. Cotton gauze or paper tissue masks; and3. Eyewear (e.g., goggles) (Note: When the use of a mask is indicated, appropriate eyewear must also be worn.).
Miscellaneous	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Put the mask on before entering the room, and after cleaning hands.2. Be sure that face mask covers the nose and mouth while performing treatment or services for the patient.3. If the face mask becomes wet, change it. Masks become ineffective when moist.4. Do not hang the face mask around the neck.5. Before changing a face mask, wash hands.6. Do not remove the mask while performing treatment or services for the patient.7. Use a mask only once and then discard it.8. Handle mask only by the strings (ties).9. Never touch the mask while it is in use.10. Follow established handwashing techniques.
When to Use a Mask	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. When providing treatment or services to a patient who has a communicable respiratory infection;2. When providing treatment or services to a patient and the use of a mask is indicated; and3. When performing a task that may involve the splashing of blood or body fluids into the mouth or nose.
Procedure Guidelines	<p>Putting on the Mask</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Obtain a mask.2. Wash your hands.3. Remove the mask from its container. (Note: If gowning procedures are necessary, put the mask on before putting on gown.)4. Unfold the mask. Do not touch the part of the mask that will cover the face. Hold the mask by the strings only.5. Place the mask over the nose and mouth. Using a shoelace bow, tie the top strings over the ears, then tie the lower strings.6. Avoid any unnecessary handling of the mask.

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**Procedure
Guidelines
(continued)**

Removing the Mask

1. Wash hands.
2. Untie the lower strings of the mask first. Hold the strings of the mask only.
3. Untie the top strings of the mask. Remove the mask from the face. Handle strings only.
4. Discard the mask into the designated waste receptacle inside the room.
5. Wash hands.