

Update to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Isolation February 3, 2021

Recently, the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 has acquired some concerning mutations. These variants of concern, such as B.1.1.7 (UK variant), P.1 (Brazil, or South American variant) and B.1.351 (South African variant) may be more transmissible, and countries where the variants are widely prevalent have seen significant increases in their COVID-19 cases. (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/pdfs/mm7003e2-H.pdf>)

Out of an abundance of caution, we will be changing our PPE recommendations as follows:

Respirators for all COVID-19 Patients:

- Health care practitioners (HCPs) caring for any patient with known or suspected COVID-19 should wear a **respirator** [N95, PAPR or elastomeric mask (3M 6800)], gown, gloves, and eye protection.
 - A single respirator may be used for an extended period of time (up to 8 hours, with up to 5 separate donning and doffing events). To allow for extended respirator use, the respirator should be protected by a faceshield during patient encounters.
 - When using a respirator for multiple patient encounters, perform a seal check with each donning event (<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2018-130/pdfs/2018-130.pdf>).
- For patients undergoing aerosol generating procedures (AGPs), goggles that fit close to the face, with minimal gaps, are the preferred eye protection.

Isolation:

All patients with known or suspected COVID-19 will be placed in Airborne + Contact isolation.

In addition, please review the following information:

Medical mask + eye protection:

As a reminder, a medical mask and eye protection must be worn for all patient encounters. For patients WITHOUT respiratory symptoms, you may continue to use the same mask for up to a day, as long as the mask does not become wet or soiled. If using a single mask for an entire day, discard at the end of the work-shift.

Fit Testing:

At the onset of the pandemic, we "Fit Tested" all of our HCPs to ensure proper respirator fit. As we are approaching one year since that effort, we will be resuming annual fit testing. More information to follow.

Cloth mask:

When available, facemasks are preferred over cloth face masks for HCPs, as facemasks offer both source control and protection for the wearer against exposure to splashes and sprays of infectious material from others.

Room Cleaning:

Wait times prior to cleaning will not change.

- If no aerosol generating procedure (AGP) was performed (and only NP swab collected for testing), rooms at both campuses can be cleaned immediately after patient exits, without waiting.
- If AGP performed, wait the following amount of time prior to cleaning:
 - VCMC, SPH airborne infection isolation ("negative pressure", or "double door") rooms: 45-minute wait time prior to cleaning
 - VCMC standard rooms: 3.5 hour wait time prior to cleaning
 - SPH standard rooms: 1.5 hour wait time prior to cleaning