

# Universal Masking FAQ for Health Care Providers

## **Q: Do I need to wear a mask all the time?**

A: Yes, all team members are expected to wear a face covering all the time while at work.

## **Q: What kind of mask do I need to wear?**

A: Any team members without patient or significant public interactions who are within our health care facilities must wear a cloth mask when in public spaces. Employees who work in office-based settings are not required to wear a cloth mask while working at desk or cubicle if social distancing is attainable between other persons. Employees must put their cloth mask back on prior to leaving the immediate work area.

Team members who interact with patients and or have significant public interactions while at work will need to wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) according to the “COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment by Respiratory Protection Type” guidelines when you are in your work area. This may require you to don a different type of mask depending on the situation and the interaction you have with patients and others.

All team members should be wearing a face covering once in the building, including while walking to and from their work area and while walking around the building.

## **Q: Why do we all need to wear masks?**

A: Masks are used to reduce community spread of COVID-19. Some people with COVID-19 have no symptoms. Even if you don't feel sick, you could spread COVID-19 to others. Wearing a mask will protect others from COVID-19 in case you are infected.

## **Q: I work in an office and my desk is 6 feet away from others. Do I need to wear a mask?**

A: If you can maintain social distancing (>6 feet) from colleagues and others in the office, you are not required to wear a cloth mask while in your work area. You should, however, wear a cloth mask when leaving your immediate work area, such as visiting the cafeteria or restroom facilities, attending in-person meetings, and walking to and from your car into the health care facility.

## **Q: What should I do with my mask when I am eating?**

A: Anytime you remove your mask, you should:

- Remove by touching the straps of the mask
- Avoid touching the outside of the mask
- Store cleanly in a way that prevents contamination, such as in a clean container or paper bag with your name on it
- Perform hand hygiene after handling your mask
- Maintain social distancing (>6 feet) from others while not wearing your mask, including in break areas or while eating with others

## **Q: How often should I wash my cloth mask?**

A: You should launder your cloth mask each day after use and anytime it is visibly soiled.

## **Q: When should I get a new mask?**

A: If your mask becomes damaged, torn, or is no longer able to cover your nose and mouth, or if your mask doesn't allow you to breathe comfortably, you should discard and obtain a new mask.

## **Q: How long will we need to practice universal masking at work?**

A: It is not yet known when community transmission of COVID-19 will be low enough in our region for it to be safe to relax social distancing and masking recommendations. BJC and WU closely monitor COVID-19 cases and transmission, along with CDC guidance. Future updates to our policies will be considered based on current data and modeling.