

# Face Mask Requirements

This protocol outlines the requirements for the use of face masks while at work.

## For all employees providing direct patient/client care or who will have any exposure to our patients and clients:

- A surgical mask is required **at all times** in all patient/client delivery settings.
- A KN95 can be utilized in the place of a surgical masks
- Surgical masks must be provided daily to all employees in all settings with client/ patient contact, at no cost to the employee.
- A fit tested N95 mask is required when providing direct care for, or being in close proximity to persons infected with COVID-19
- A fit tested N95 mask is also required when performing aerosol-generating procedures like deep suctioning, tracheostomy care, or aerosolized medication administration on any and all clients/patients regardless of infectious diagnosis.
- Any employee who uses an N95 mask (as noted above) will be fit tested <http://3qxywz2sa0t532zi3y1xw4kn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/3m-quick-reference-guidequalitative-fit-testing.pdf>

## For employees that work in office settings:

For employees that work in office settings, a mask should be worn in indoor settings if:

- a) Employee is at high risk for severe illness (check with your healthcare provider)
- b) If your office is located in a community with a high level of the COVID-19 infection level in your community as per the CDC's COVID-by-County Tracker :

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

Low	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stay <a href="#">up to date</a> with COVID-19 vaccines</li><li>• <a href="#">Get tested</a> if you have symptoms</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you are <a href="#">at high risk for severe illness</a>, talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions</li><li>• Stay <a href="#">up to date</a> with COVID-19 vaccines</li><li>• <a href="#">Get tested</a> if you have symptoms</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wear a <a href="#">mask</a> indoors in public</li><li>• Stay <a href="#">up to date</a> with COVID-19 vaccines</li><li>• <a href="#">Get tested</a> if you have symptoms</li><li>• Additional precautions may be needed for people <a href="#">at high risk for severe illness</a></li></ul>

Employees may choose to mask at any time.

## Face Mask Selection

### When should a cloth mask be used?

- The use of cloth masks is not recommended but does offer greater protection than no mask.

### When should a surgical mask be used?

- A surgical mask is required **at all times** in all patient/client delivery settings.
- A surgical mask should be worn if an employee is at high risk for severe illness (check with your healthcare provider) or if your office is located in a community with a high level of the COVID-19 infection level per the CDC's County by County Tracker
- The mask may be removed while eating after leaving common areas, while staying at least 6 feet from others and when outdoors.
- Surgical masks must be provided daily to all employees in healthcare settings with client and patient contact at no cost to the employee.
- A KN95 can be utilized in the place of a surgical mask for the above situations

**What is an N95 mask and when should I wear one?** (This refers specifically to NIOSH/FDA approved N95 respirator masks, not KN95 masks)

An N95 mask provides a greater degree of filtration and is reserved for use when:

- Providing direct care for, or being in close proximity to persons infected with COVID-19
- Performing aerosol-generating procedures like deep suctioning, tracheostomy care, or aerosolized medication administration.

### When using the NIOSH/FDA approved N95 mask:

- Ensure that all employees who will use an N95 mask have received education on its use, including seal checks, donning and doffing procedures, conservation and storage for reuse.
- Employees issued an N95 mask must be "fit tested". Contact your Director of Clinical Practice should you need a fit test kit and training on how to conduct the fit test.
- In order to conserve PPE, the N95 mask may be reused by the same person, for extended periods and for multiple days. It should be discarded when the physical integrity of the mask is no longer viable (e.g., soiled, wet, torn, elastics broken down, etc.).
- In residential settings, a team member may wear the same n95 mask throughout the day and for multiple days.
- In visit-based settings (such as Home Health, Home Care and Hospice), a different N95 should be worn for each patient/client.
- N95 Masks should not be stored for reuse in air-tight containers (like a Ziplock bag). A paper bag should be used with the team member or patient/client name on the bag.
- The respirator must be stored for at least five calendar days between use and kept away from water or moisture.
- The respirator cannot be used more than five days total.
- When removed, the N95 mask should immediately be placed in the paper bag and not left on surfaces (table, countertop, etc.).

Your Regional Director of Clinical Practice can provide direction and support in these instances.