Mask Policy at UHN

For patients and Essential Care Partners

What is a Universal Masking Policy?

Everyone must wear a medical mask while inside the hospital.

This includes:

- patients coming to the hospital for appointments, tests or treatment (outpatients)
- patients staying in the hospital overnight (inpatients)
- patients getting care in the Emergency Department
- pre-approved Essential Care Partners (a person who is at the hospital to support a patient)
- contractors and delivery persons
- UHN staff

Exceptions may apply for patients with medical conditions that prevent them from wearing a mask. The exception must be approved by a UHN doctor or nurse practitioner.

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

All outpatients and approved Essential Care Partners (ECPs) must wear a mask while inside the hospital.

Inpatients must wear a mask any time they leave their hospital room.
For patients with a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask:

- Ask your UHN doctor or nurse practitioner for a mask exemption before coming to the hospital.
- You will get a Face Mask Exemption Form if your exemption is approved.
- Show the form to the entrance screeners when you arrive at the hospital and they will give you a face shield to wear instead of a mask.
- Entrance screeners cannot give Face Mask Exemption Forms at the hospital doors.
- ECPs cannot ask for a face mask exemption.

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

Entrance screening staff give you a medical mask when you arrive at the hospital. They will explain how to put it on properly. Entrance screening staff will give you 1 medical mask each day.

Please wear this mask the entire time you are inside the hospital.

KN95, N95, disposable and cloth face masks come in a range of qualities, and there are counterfeit products on the market. Since entrance screening staff are not able to check the quality of masks people wear to the hospital, we require everyone to wear the medical mask provided.

If you prefer to wear this new mask over top of one you are wearing when you arrive, you can do so.

**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.

If you are staying at the hospital overnight, ask your health care team for a medical mask when you need one.

**How do I wear a medical mask?**

• Your mask should always cover your nose, mouth and chin.
• The ear loops or ties should be attached properly.
• The mask must not have any tears, holes or vents. Ask your health care team for a new mask if yours 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.

For more information on how to wear a mask, read [Masking Dos and Don’ts](https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health_Information/Health_Topics/Documents/Masking_Dos_Donts.pdf).

**I’m staying in the hospital as an inpatient. When do I have to wear a mask?**

Inpatients must wear a medical mask when leaving their room for any reason, such as for medical tests or appointments. Keep the medical mask on at all times when outside your room.

When in your room, please wear a medical mask when:

• interacting with your health care team
• visiting with your Essential Care Partner
• you cannot stay 2 metres (6 feet) or more away from other patients sharing your room, such as when getting to the bathroom
Ask your health care team for a medical mask. Do not wear a mask from home.

I’m coming to the hospital as an outpatient or Essential Care Partner. When can I remove my mask?

Keep your medical mask on at all times while inside the hospital.

- If your health care team asks you to take it off during your appointment or treatment: Clean your hands with hand sanitizer. Hold the ear loops or ties and remove your mask carefully. Do not touch your face or the front of the mask.

- Please wait until you leave the hospital to eat or drink. If you’re not able to wait, please do not remove your mask in a clinic waiting room or inpatient room.

- You may want to keep the medical mask on when leaving the hospital. The City of Toronto bylaws state you must wear a mask when taking public transit, using rideshare services or entering a building. Learn more about the City of Toronto’s bylaws (https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-what-you-should-do/covid-19-orders-directives-by-laws/).

How do I safely remove my medical mask when I’m outside of the hospital or at home?

Remove your medical mask carefully to reduce your risk of infection.

1. Clean your hands using soap and water or hand sanitizer.

2. Hold the mask by the ear loops and pull the mask away from your face. Do not touch your face or the outside of the mask.

3. Put the medical mask in the garbage.

4. Clean your hands again.

What else do I need to know before coming to UHN?

Learn about current policies and what to expect when you arrive at the hospital by reading:

- What Essential Care Partners Need to Know Before Coming to UHN (https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health_Information/Health_Topics/Documents/Essential_Care_Partners_Quick_Guide.pdf)
- UHN’s COVID-19 information page (http://www.uhn.ca/COVID19)

For more information

Ask the entrance screening staff or your health care team if you have questions about wearing a medical mask at the hospital.

For more information about preventing the spread of COVID-19 call:

- Toronto Public Health Helpline at 416 338 7600
- Telehealth Ontario at 1 866 797 0000