

Dear Colleagues,

At CUIMC, our number one priority continues to be the health and safety of our patients and our workforce. The following is a clarification and update on our commitment to you and your safety.

1. Surgical masks:

- As of March 20th, all CUIMC employees (regardless of your work assignment or location) have been provided with one surgical mask to use at home if you begin to feel ill. This is for the protection of your household members or others you come into contact with.
- As of March 27th, we asked all faculty and staff in patient-facing areas to wear a surgical mask continuously during the work day whether you are in an inpatient or outpatient location.

2. N95 respirator masks:

- Many of our patient-facing faculty and staff have already been using N95 respirator masks when they are performing clinically indicated (*i.e., aerosol-generating*) procedures on suspected/confirmed COVID-19 patients. These are being provided by the practices and reissued as needed. N95 respirator masks are also to be covered by a surgical mask.
- We also want to provide all of our patient-facing faculty and staff with one N95 respirator mask to ensure that everyone who *may* need an N95 respirator mask will have one on hand. To help balance the need for masks against our tight supplies, we have developed a new process to distribute N95 respirator masks to those who need them, as noted below.

The new N95 respirator mask process will begin starting March 30, and we will phase it in as soon as possible across all outpatient locations. Masks will be distributed to department administrators to issue to each provider. Additionally, masks will be allocated to all active, outpatient practice locations, where designated employees will give out the masks as needed. Information on how to properly fit an N95 respirator mask can be found on the NYP Infonet at [Infonet.nyp.org](https://infonet.nyp.org). If you have access to Epic you can use your Epic CWID and password to access the Infonet.

Please use your N95 respirator mask only when you are dealing with a suspected or actual COVID-19 positive patient. For all other patient encounters, wear your surgical mask. All surgical masks should be discarded when visibly soiled, contaminated, or wet. Your practice location can supply you with a replacement.

The following are instructions on how to use and dispose of your N95 respirator mask. When caring for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19:

- Place a surgical mask or face shield over the N95 respirator mask to prevent droplet contamination of the N95 respirator mask.
- Because we are requiring you to cover the N95 respirator mask, it can be reused between multiple patients over multiple shifts until visibly soiled, contaminated, or wet, or fails a fit check.
- To conserve your N95 respirator mask and to keep it clean between uses, put it in a bag that will be provided to you.
- If consecutively seeing multiple confirmed COVID-19 patients in the *same room*, remove gloves, perform hand hygiene, and don new gloves prior to caring for the next patient. Do not change the N95 respirator mask, gown, eye protection, or surgical mask between patients in the same room.

NYP has instituted a virtually identical policy for their inpatient settings.

We are also pleased to advise you that a working group of our researchers have developed an N95 respirator mask sterilization process which we will be piloting at one of our locations in order to preserve these precious items, should supplies be further constrained.

Thank you for your continued support as we care for our patients during this challenging time.

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