

**Interim Guidance for Use of Face Coverings and Personal Protective
Equipment by NYP Patients and Visitors
Updated February 10, 2021
(Replaces Guidance Published June 17, 2020)**

Key Updates

- **A surgical mask** (*instead of, or in addition to, a cloth face covering*) is now recommended for **ALL patients (regardless of COVID-19 result) and visitors** at all inpatient and affiliated ambulatory locations. Previous guidance recommended either a cloth face covering or a surgical mask for patients and visitors. Patients and visitors may still wear a cloth face covering if it is worn in addition to the surgical mask.
 - Rationale: Cloth face coverings are variable in quality and level of protection, both for the wearer and for those in the vicinity of the wearer. Surgical masks meet quality standards as personal protective equipment (PPE) and provide more reliable protection.

As part of efforts to protect all patients, visitors, and health care personnel (HCP) from exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, NYP recommends the use of a **surgical mask by all patients (regardless of COVID-19 result), visitors, and HCP** at all inpatient and affiliated ambulatory locations. This is to reduce possible transmission from individuals who have mild or asymptomatic COVID-19. Exceptions can be made for adult or pediatric (e.g., < 2 years old) patients who cannot tolerate a face mask. NYP will provide a surgical mask to all patients, visitors, and HCP, when they enter any inpatient or affiliated ambulatory location as well as upon request. If a patient or visitor chooses to wear their own cloth face covering, a surgical mask should be worn in addition (i.e. double mask). Patients or visitors who are wearing their own respirator (e.g., KN95) do not also require a surgical mask, however, if the respirator has an exhalation valve it must be covered by a surgical mask. Bandanas and gaiters are not acceptable face coverings.

ALL PERSONS ENTERING NYP WILL BE ASKED TO IMMEDIATELY DON A MASK.

ADULT and PEDIATRIC¹ PATIENTS	
Ambulatory Sites	Surgical mask should be worn throughout the visit until the patient leaves the facility.
Emergency Rooms	
Inpatient Areas (other than Labor & Delivery and Postpartum Units)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgical mask should be worn while in open spaces and hallways. • Surgical mask can be removed when inside a room, however, please note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inpatients should be provided a surgical mask and encouraged to wear it, if tolerated, when HCP or visitors enter the room and come into close contact with the patient. • Masks do not need to be worn while the patient is asleep. • In multi-bedded patient rooms, patients do not need to wear a mask if the curtain is drawn between patient beds.
Labor & Delivery Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgical mask should be worn throughout labor and delivery, as tolerated.
Postpartum Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgical mask should be worn throughout hospitalization, including within patient's room.

Radiology Areas Peri-operative Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surgical mask should be worn throughout the visit, until the patient leaves the facility. If the mask needs to be removed during a procedure, it should be put back on as soon as possible.
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¹Although mask use is not recommended for children <2 years of age, children >2 years of age should be encouraged to wear a mask in the above situations as tolerated.

VISITORS TO ADULT and PEDIATRIC PATIENTS	
Visitors to patient with confirmed or suspected COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All visitors to patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 should wear NYP-provided surgical mask, gown, and gloves throughout their visit in the patient's room. Eye protection should also be provided. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cloth face covering should not be worn over the surgical mask to avoid contamination of the cloth face covering. Prior to leaving the room, visitors should remove and discard their gown and gloves, perform hand hygiene, and then remove and discard eye protection and surgical mask. Hand hygiene should then be repeated. The visitor should be provided with a new surgical mask upon leaving the room.
Ambulatory Sites	Surgical mask should be worn throughout the visit.
Emergency Rooms	
Inpatient areas (other than Labor & Delivery, Post-Partum, and Pediatric Units)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All visitors to inpatient units should wear a surgical mask throughout their visit. Additional personal protective equipment may also be required. Additional information about visitation on inpatient units is available in General Visitation Guidelines
Pediatric Units (excluding Neonatal ICUs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The support person for a pediatric patient without COVID-19 should don a surgical mask when they arrive at the facility and wear it throughout their visit, including in the patient's room, until they leave the facility. The support person should also don a gown and gloves if their clothing could become contaminated with secretions or excretions. Additional information available in Interim Guidance for Parents/ Guardian Visits to Pediatric Patients
Neonatal ICUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All visitors to the Neonatal ICUs should don a surgical mask, gown, and gloves throughout their visit, including in the patient's room. Prior to leaving the Neonatal ICU, visitors should remove their gown and gloves at the bedside, perform hand hygiene, and continue to wear their surgical mask throughout the facility.
Labor & Delivery Units and Postpartum Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The support person and/or doula for a laboring woman should don a surgical mask when they arrive at the facility and wear it throughout their visit until they leave the facility. Additional information available in Interim Guidance for Visitors to Labor and Delivery Unit