

## Masking Requirements During the Flu Season

**Purpose:** To protect patients and other co-workers from exposure to influenza virus.

**Guidelines:** All staff who have NOT been vaccinated against influenza but who were either granted an accommodation of masking or who are governed by our infectious disease control policy will be required to wear respiratory protection, in the form of a surgical mask for the duration of the flu season. The mask needs to be worn at all times, with the exception of breaks and meals.

Masks may be removed during meal and break times to allow the staff person to eat and drink without hindrance. Meals and breaks must be taken in areas appropriately designated for those purposes.

To be fully functional the surgical mask must fit snugly, cover the nose and mouth and be secured to the face with ties or elastic. The metal nasal piece should be molded securely to the nose.

The mask should be discarded, at a minimum, at the end of the shift and immediately replaced if it becomes soiled or moist. It is recommended that the mask be changed approximately every 2 hours or more frequently if needed. Minimal time is required to change the mask. A damp mask may contribute to facial irritation.

Employees in clinical areas need to continue to follow appropriate Infection Control guidelines for isolation practices depending on the type of patient they are caring for.

Please notify ([organization contact and phone number](#)) if you develop signs and symptoms of influenza type illness or mask problems.