

Conservation and Safe Re-use of Surgical Masks

General Principles:

- PPE is a vital resource to protect our healthcare personnel.
- Conservation and appropriate use are essential to managing large-scale outbreaks, such as COVID-19.
- Hoarding and theft, by the general public and healthcare providers, is a risk and should be anticipated. Securing sites where PPE is stored is important.
- Reduce PPE use through cohorting, staff assignments, and other measures to limit number of patient-provider contacts requiring PPE.
- Once a mask is put on, it should remain on for the duration of your shift. If you do need to remove it during the shift, conserve mask for re-use per instructions below.
- Masks need to be replaced when soiled and after aerosol-generating procedures.

Safe Mask Re-use

In concert with recent CDC guidance on crisis capacity use of PPE

- One healthcare or support service provider will use the **same mask** throughout their shift.
 - Masks **do not** need to be changed between patients or patient rooms regardless of patient type, chief complaint, or diagnosis
 - Masks should be **kept on** throughout the shift to avoid transmission between potentially infected by asymptomatic healthcare workers.
 - Masks **do** need to be replaced if soiled and after aerosol-generating procedures.
- Mask will be kept on, properly positioned over nose and mouth, at all times for duration of shift, or as long as possible (see below for mask removal/preservation)
- Masks must not be touched, pulled down, malpositioned, or worn as a necklace.
- If the mask gets torn, wet, visibly soiled, or hard to breathe through, it should be removed and discarded.
- **THE OUTSIDE OF THE MASK SHOULD BE TREATED AS POTENTIALLY INFECTIOUS**
 - **Avoid** touching the outer surface of the mask.
 - **EVERY TIME** the mask is touched **hand hygiene** must be performed.

- If the mask must be removed for any reason prior to the scheduled change, use these steps to **preserve the same mask for reuse**:
 - **Do not touch** the outer surface of the mask when removing.
 - Carefully fold the mask so that the outer/dirty surface is folded inward on itself
 - Place mask in a paper bag or unsealed bag which is labeled with your name
 - Perform hand hygiene after touching the mask
 - Masks should **NEVER** be placed on counter, computer, sleeve, or worn on the body anywhere besides the appropriate position on the face
- **If masks are unavailable: Use a face shield that covers the entire front (that extends to the chin or below) and sides of the face with no facemask.**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html>