

April 15, 2020

All health-care workers whose roles require **direct contact with patients, clients and residents** are advised to wear surgical/procedural masks when providing direct care to patients, clients and residents across Island Health.

Who does this apply to?

- All staff, medical staff and contracted staff with direct contact with patients, clients and residents in acute care, critical care, long-term care, home and community care, public health, and Island Health owned and operated primary care, including Urgent Primary Care Centres.
- This guidance does not apply to staff who are not providing direct care to patients, clients and residents.

Surgical/procedural masks

- To preserve PPE, you do not need to change your mask between patients, only when it is visibly dirty, damp, or too damaged for safe use. Immediately perform hand hygiene when you change your mask.
- Avoid touching your mask unnecessarily. If you must touch or adjust your mask, perform hand hygiene. If you see a colleague touch/adjust their mask, remind them to perform hand hygiene.
- Change your mask during breaks.

Droplet Precautions

- PPE For [Droplet Precautions](#) (including patients who are suspected of COVID-19 (awaiting lab results) or are confirmed to have COVID-19) has not changed, and includes:
 - a surgical mask
 - eye protection
 - gloves
 - gown
- PPE (including masks) **should be removed** after providing care to patients on droplet/airborne precautions, using appropriate [doffing procedures](#).
- N95 respirators must be used for [aerosol-generating medical procedures only](#).

Tips for Use and Conservation of PPE

- Minimize the number of clinicians providing direct care to a patient on isolation. This includes not having students and learners provide care to isolation patients.
- Review all equipment and supplies needed before entering the room or client home.
- Bundle tasks together to minimize trips into a patient room or home visits.
- Before providing care, ensure you have all the supplies you need to provide care so that you don't have to leave the patient care area.

Additional Guidance

- Follow additional infection prevention control precautions as appropriate for the clinical scenario. Additional recommendations are available on the [COVID-19](#) page on the intranet.
- Remember the key step to protecting patients and yourself is good hand hygiene **at all times**.
- If you have questions, please direct them to your site or unit leader.