COVID-19
Guidance on the Extended Wear of Medical Face Masks in Green Zones

PPE is only one element of Routine Practices, and must be used in conjunction with other routine practices to protect the healthcare worker, such as:

- Strict adherence to the four moments of hand hygiene
- Physical (social) distancing
- Respiratory hygiene
- Staying home if you are ill*

*Note: The masking strategy is intended to prevent transmission from asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic health care workers. If a health care worker shows signs of illness they must be excluded from duty.

This document only addresses donning and doffing (putting on and taking off) a medical face mask as well as eye/face protection. It does not cover the procedures for donning and doffing other forms of PPE. If your point of care risk assessment (PCRA) and/or the Provincial PPE Requirements indicate other PPE should be used for a task, please refer to PPE Instructional Resources for guidance on safely putting on and taking off other PPE.

**Important points:**
- **ALWAYS** perform strict hand hygiene **BEFORE and AFTER** donning/doffing PPE
- Remove eye protection (if using) and disinfect as per Shared Health guidelines
- Move slowly and thoughtfully

**Definitions**

- **Alcohol Based hand Rub (ABHR)** is a waterless hand sanitizer that contains between 60-90% alcohol
- **Extended use** is the continuous wearing of an item of PPE between patients, e.g. without removal between patients.
- **Meticulous hand hygiene** refers to doing hand hygiene thoroughly and carefully ensuring all parts of the hands including wrists are cleaned with either ABHR or soap and water
- **Medical Face Mask** is a term used to refer to either procedure or surgical masks being used as part of the Provincial Personal Protective Equipment Requirements
**DOFFING INSTRUCTIONS**

**Mask with Loops**

1. **Perform meticulous hand hygiene**

2. Remove mask by using the ear loops at the back of the ears

3. Gently, stretch ear-loops to flatten mask, try to avoid touching the very front part of the mask

4. Using ear loops, bring top (nosepiece) and bottom ends of mask together to fold mask lengthwise with outer (patient facing) side in on itself

5. Hold with one hand by ear-loop
   
   *Can touch the very edge if needed to keep mask folded*

6. Carefully dispose of mask in nearest garbage

9. **Perform meticulous hand hygiene**

**Mask with Ties**

1. **Perform meticulous hand hygiene**

2. Remove mask by using ties

2. Untie at base of the neck first and then at the back of the head, remove mask using the top set of ties

3. Carefully dispose of mask in nearest garbage

4. **Perform meticulous hand hygiene**

**When to discard your mask:**

- For breaks
- Prior to – and during - eating a meal
- At the end of your shift
- When it is visibly soiled
- When it becomes damp (sweat, humidity from breathing)
- When you have touched the front of your mask
- If the mask comes in direct contact with a patient
- When you have been directly exposed to respiratory droplets (someone has coughed or sneezed into your face). NOTE: this may not be an issue if you were wearing a full-face shield at the time
- Remember to use social distancing when not wearing a mask (stay 2 metres/6 feet from others)