



Homewood
Health

Homewood
Santé

Sept. 8, 2023

Re: Updated patient masking policy

Dear Homewood patients,

After careful review of our current COVID-19 policies with our Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) team, we have updated our current masking policy.

Effective Saturday, Sept 9, 2023:

- All staff are required to wear a mask when interacting with patients and in areas of close proximity.
- Visitors are required to wear a mask when indoors. Masks are not required for outdoor visits as long as physical distancing is maintained.
- Patients can continue to not wear masks at any point during their time here unless directed to do so by IPAC or their healthcare team.
- As a patient, we will respect your **request to wear a mask while interacting with anyone at Homewood, if preferred**. We want you to feel comfortable as you receive care.

Thank you in advance for your continued cooperation. We hope these new measures will enhance your patient experience while at Homewood. Please speak with a member of your unit staff if you have questions.

Thank you,

Homewood Health Centre

Guiding principles:

For situations that may not be obviously considered direct patient contact, use a point-of-care risk assessment to determine whether:

- You will have significant or prolonged exposure (i.e., cumulatively greater than 10-15 minutes)
- You are likely to encounter patients in a confined or small space without the ability to open windows/improve ventilation or distance by two meters.

If yes, wear a mask. Beyond these general guiding principles, below are a few specific questions and answers for further clarity.

Frequently asked questions:

1. Will masks continue to be restocked at the front entrance?

Masks will continue to be available at the screener desk (main entrance), at the Vista entrance, and upon request in any areas that they may be required.

2. Is masking mandatory for contractors while on the construction site or in mechanical areas?

When working in units (either hallways or occupied rooms), yes, contractors are asked to wear a mask. However, unoccupied clinical areas (under construction) are exempt from masking. General hallways do not require masking.

3. Do staff who walk through a unit need to wear a mask or only if going into a patient room while the patient is in there?

Hallways of clinical areas are considered a clinical space and require staff to keep their mask on.

4. Do staff have to wear a mask in the patient dining room?

Yes. Staff who are serving meals or walking in close proximity to patients are interacting directly with patients and are required to wear a mask.

5. Do Nutrition Staff delivering trays or going to units to stock have to wear a mask?

Yes, recognizing that such staff also serve meals to patients on a regular basis. Units are considered clinical spaces and any entry into them requires a mask.

6. If I am in the gym playing sports with patients, should I be wearing a mask?

Yes, as that falls under direct patient contact.

7. Are food and drink allowed in the greenery?

Yes, patients and staff are allowed to eat and drink in the greenery. In applying the guiding principles noted above, if staff find themselves in prolonged, direct patient contact, we ask that staff apply a mask.

8. If staff don't have to wear masks in the hallways, do the Porters have to wear the masks?

No, staff do not have to wear masks in general, common hallways.

9. Do staff need to be masked when interacting with visitors?

Not unless the interaction is taking place in a clinical setting where staff are required to always wear a mask. Visitors are asked to wear a mask at all times indoors though.