



COVID-19 Update

Date: Monday, April 20, 2020

To: Everyone at HHS

From: Kelly Campbell, VP, Corporate Services and Capital Development
Kirsten Krull, VP, Quality and Performance & CNE
Leslie Gauthier, VP, Clinical Support Services and Surgery

Subject: **PPE Update – Ensuring teams get access to the right supplies**

To ensure a sustainable supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) for all HHS teams and services, we will be realigning the stocks of PPE provided by the logistics and supply chain team to all units and departments.

Our main goal is to ensure that appropriate levels/categories of PPE are available to those who need it based on the risk of exposure to blood, bodily fluids, infections (including COVID-19), as well as occupational hazards.

PPE unit stocking

This means that some units, departments and service areas across HHS, may be stocked with different or new PPE products, starting today. Using appropriate evidence, assessment of clinical risk, and ethical principles, PPE stock may be different than what was previously available in each unit. However, stocks will be available in adequate supply to keep staff and physicians safe.

This does not change processes regarding AGMPs and identified PPE requirements. As a matter of general practice, all health care workers should conduct Point of Care Risk Assessments to determine their PPE requirements for a given task.

PPE category – Masks

Key functions:

1. Masks protect staff from infectious droplets, fluid splashes, and infectious aerosols during AGMPs
2. Masks also serve to protect patients or coworkers from an asymptomatic staff member who may be shedding an infectious organism before they become symptomatic (e.g. COVID).

Hospital grade masks are able to perform both of the above functions.

Levels of masks:

- All ASTM Level masks (1 to 3) are fluid resistant (and are safe for COVID care)
 - Unrated masks are not ASTM rated but serve to protect patients and coworkers from asymptomatic staff/physicians.
- N95 masks are necessary for airborne pathogens (e.g. TB), and are used for AGMPs in COVID patients

Available mask stocks by unit/area:

- All clinical units and diagnostic teams (DI, MDU) for “patient facing” staff and physicians:
 - level 1 surgical masks and N95 respirators as indicated
 - ICUs/EDs:
 - for “patient facing” staff and physicians: level 2 surgical masks and N95 respirators as indicated;
 - staff working in these areas that are not “forward facing” our patients, will be given a Level 1 mask
 - Units where chemotherapy occurs:
 - Level 3 surgical masks for the staff directly mixing or handling chemotherapy
 - All other staff would wear a Level 1 mask.
 - Pharmacy and laboratories: because of the difficulty in adhering to physical distancing in these areas:
 - unrated masks will be made available (to protect patients and/or coworkers)
 - Registration areas where physical distancing cannot occur:
 - unrated masks will be made available
 - All Procedural areas:
 - Level 1 mask with extended use policy (to be replaced only when visibly soiled or damaged).
 - N95 masks will be available for AGMP’s.
 - This includes the OR’s, HIU, Arrhythmia Lab, L&D, Interventional Radiology, etc.
-

-
- **NOTE ON EXTENDED USE:** this protocol applies to ALL areas and masks should be replaced only when visibly soiled or damaged

PPE category – Gowns

Launderable Linen Gowns

- Linen yellow gowns (or blue linen gowns) for “Droplet and/or Contact Precautions” can be worn by staff when there is not a significant risk of blood or bodily fluid contact, including COVID positive patients, MRSA, VRE
- Reprocessible Gortex (Blue) Sterile gowns are used in the OR, Endoscopy, HIU, Arrhythmia Service and Labour & Delivery

Disposable Gowns come in different levels based on their fluid barrier quality

- Yellow disposable gown (unrated) can to be used for “Droplet and/or Contact Precautions” and can be worn by staff when there is not a significant risk of blood or bodily fluid contact, including COVID positive patients, MRSA, VRE
- Level 2 gowns are available for the Code Blue Team, ICU, ED, Labour and Delivery (when indicated based on the PCRA of degree of fluid splashes/contact)
- Level 3 gowns are to be used in areas where chemo is being prepared or administered
- Level 4 Gowns are considered the highest level of fluid barrier protection only (reserved for viral hemorrhagic fevers such as Ebola) (not in circulation at this time)

PPE category – Face Shields

- Staff and physicians are encouraged to reuse plastic-only goggles and face shields. They are to be washed with soap and water at the end of the shift and reused.
- Face shields with foam securement devices are not to be reused, because they cannot be washed with soap and water, extended use can continue.
- Virox wipes should not be used to clean Face Shields for reuse

PPE category – Plexiglass

- Where plexiglass barriers are present, there is no need for a mask, unless two or more individuals are working behind the plexiglass and cannot maintain physical distancing.
 - In these cases, your manager will ask Health, Safety and Wellness to assess the workspace and make a recommendation to provide the appropriate barrier.

We thank everyone across HHS for helping us ensure we retain enough PPE supplies to keep caring for patients safely and to protect each other from the spread of COVID-19.
