

Elara  Caring

**Daily Facemask use
direct care/ field team members**

4.9.2020



Dear Elara Caring Team Members,

We continue to be awed by your response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The personal stories of going above and beyond in this time of need, are inspirational! We continue to thank you for all of your hard work and extra efforts in fighting this virus!

As we head into the potential 'apex' of the COVID-19 curve, **we have decided out of an abundance of precaution, to ask our direct care team members to wear a facemask all day while out seeing their patients/clients.** We have ordered millions of dollars in supplies to meet this directive.

The following slides will review which facemasks should be utilized in the following order:



Direct care/ Field staff – Daily Facemask



Surgical/Procedural facemasks

- This is the preferred facemask to be worn, **unless caring for suspected or positive COVID-19 patients/clients.**
- Wear a homemade facemask or a face-shield over the surgical/procedural facemask to prolong its use. Doing so should allow a surgical/procedural facemask to last a team member an entire day. This is a general guideline, some may last longer, some shorter. It is up to the team member to evaluate how long the facemask can be used.
- Never share your surgical/ procedural facemask with another team member or patient/client.
- Care should be taken to ensure that you do not touch outer surfaces of the mask during care, and that mask removal and replacement be done in a careful and deliberate manner.
- The facemask should be removed and discarded if soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through.
- Not all facemasks can be re-used. Facemasks that fasten via ties may not be able to be undone without tearing and should be considered only for extended use (such as leaving it on all day without removing it between visits), rather than re-use (removing it between visits).
- Facemasks with elastic ear hooks may be more suitable for re-use.
- Team members should leave patient care area if they need to remove the facemask. Facemasks should be carefully folded so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage. The folded mask can be stored between uses in a clean sealable paper bag or breathable container.



Direct care/ Field staff – Daily Facemask



Respirator masks (N95/KN95s)- non COVID-19 patients

The guidance in this section applies to team members when NOT caring for a suspected or positive COVID-19 patient, and when the surgical/procedural masks are not available.

- In the event there are no surgical/procedural facemasks in your location, you may wear a respirator mask (N95,KN95). Also... remember.... **N95/KN95 respirator masks are to be worn when caring for suspected or positive COVID-19 patients.**
- Consider use of a cleanable face shield, surgical/procedural mask, or homemade facemask over an N95 respirator and/or other steps (e.g., masking patients), when feasible to reduce surface contamination of the respirator.
- CDC recommends that a respirator classified as disposable can be reused by the same worker as long as it remains functional. In general, we believe that proper use and protection of a respirator mask will allow it to last approximately 5-7 days. But the team member needs to inspect their respirator mask and evaluate its functionality (are the ear bands tight, are you still getting a good seal etc..).
- Limited re-use is the practice of using the same respirator by one team member for multiple encounters with different patients but removing it after each encounter.
- Team members should leave patient care area if they need to remove the respirator mask.
- Care should be taken to ensure that team member does not touch outer surfaces of the mask during care, and that mask removal and replacement be done in a careful and deliberate manner.
- Hang used respirators in a designated storage area or keep them in a clean, breathable container such as a paper bag between uses. To minimize potential cross-contamination, store respirators so that they do not touch each other and the person using the respirator is clearly identified. Storage containers should be disposed of or cleaned regularly.
- Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the respirator (if necessary for comfort or to maintain fit).
- Avoid touching the inside of the respirator. If inadvertent contact is made with the inside of the respirator, discard the respirator and perform hand hygiene as described above.
- Use a pair of clean (non-sterile) gloves when donning a used N95 respirator and performing a user seal check. Discard gloves after the N95 respirator is donned and any adjustments are made to ensure the respirator is sitting comfortably on your face with a good seal.
- Respirators grossly contaminated with blood, respirator or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids from patients should be discarded.
- Discard N95 respirators following use during aerosol generating procedures.

Direct care/ Field staff – Daily Facemask

Respirator masks (N95/KN95s)- COVID-19 patients

The guidance in this section applies to team members when caring for a suspected or positive COVID-19 patient,

- **N95/KN95 respirator masks are to be worn when caring for suspected or positive COVID-19 patients.**
- Follow all of the above recommendations listed under the non-COVID-19 patients section, PLUS:

When caring for suspected or positive COVID-19 patients, do not use a respirator mask that has been re-used (taken on and off your face) more than 5 times

Please see updated In-Home Caregiver FLOW CHART, dated 4.9.2020 to reflect this update

If your location needs to order more facemask supplies, please utilize the process sent out by Rob Laguerre on 4.6.2020





Thank you to all of Elara Caring's team members – from direct patient care providers to those supporting our teams in other important roles – for continuing to provide outstanding, safe care during these challenging times.

We appreciate each of you!

