

Nebraska Medicine Clear Surgical Mask Guidance

Reuse of Surgical Clear Mask for Healthcare Personnel

(Updated 3/10/2021)



Overview:

The recommendations in this guidance are temporary while there are national and international shortages of clear surgical masks. These guidelines apply to all health care personnel (HCPs) who need to wear clear surgical mask when caring for deaf and hard of hearing patients. **Only Nebraska Medicine approved and issued clear masks will be acceptable for use in patient care areas.**

Purpose:

- To prevent a shortage or exhaust our supply of clear surgical facemasks.
- To ensure that our staff have access to the necessary supplies to perform patient care safely to deaf and hard of hearing patients.

Definitions:

- **Reuse** refers to the practice of using the same face mask for multiple encounters of deaf and hard of hearing patients **ONLY** but removing it ('doffing') between encounters. When not in use, the facemask is stored per the below guidelines.

General Guidance:

Per the CDC, the Clear Surgical Facemask is intended for use in healthcare settings as an alternative type of mask to protect both patients and healthcare workers from transfer of body fluids, microorganisms, and particulate material. The face mask will be used for colleagues who interact with patients who are deaf and hard of hearing. **DO NOT** wear this mask when caring for a COVID positive or Rule Out patient. In the event that the mask becomes visibly soiled, saturated or damaged, a new mask must be obtained.

- Clear surgical facemasks can be re-used during periods of short supply when caring for deaf and hard of hearing patients as long as they are not damaged, soiled or saturated.
- Clear surgical masks are **NOT** N95 masks and should NOT be used when caring for COVID positive or rule out patients.
- Guidance is for reuse by a single person (no sharing).
- The clear surgical mask will be issued to staff with a handled brown paper bag. Label the paper bag with user's name, date, and type of mask before using to prevent reuse by another individual.
- All supplies of clear surgical masks will be **distributed by interpretive services** (1865 Clarkson Tower) for deaf and hard of hearing patients **ONLY**. They can be reached at 402-559-8697.

Guidance on Clear Surgical Mask Use and Re-Use

Doffing a facemask with intent to reuse:

- Perform hand hygiene
- Remove mask
 - Remove clear surgical mask by holding the ear loops
 - The front is contaminated, so remove slowly and carefully
- After removing the facemask, visually inspect for contamination, distortion in shape/form
 - If a non-wipeable part of the mask is soiled or saturated the mask should be discarded
 - If the mask is torn, it should be discarded
- If the facemask is NOT visibly soiled, torn, or saturated, carefully store in designated brown paper bag (*see below for guidance on how to use a brown paper bag for storage*)
- If the inside clear portion of the facemask is visibly soiled:
 - Using a Nebraska Medicine approved germicidal disinfectant wipe, adequately clean/disinfect the inside clear surfaces
 - Do NOT use personal wipes brought from home to clean the clear portion of the mask
 - Avoid using germicidal wipes on cloth and band
 - Carefully store in designated brown paper bag after cleaning/disinfecting

- Do NOT store on a paper towel; unless intending to use the mask within 30 minutes from time of removal
 - If you plan to don the mask immediately, then carefully store on a paper towel, exterior side down toward the towel
- The use of a facemask may be extended over several days/weeks until the mask becomes visibly soiled, torn, or damaged

A brown, handled paper bag may be used to store a clear facemask for use over several days/weeks

**please note: this brown bag should be separate from brown bags used for holding used N95 respirators for decontamination and regular surgical masks*

- Record name, date, “clear mask,” and “front” on the front of the brown bag
- Store the used clear facemask in the well-ventilated paper bag with handles.
- Place the front of mask toward “front” of paper bag, looping ear loop over bag handle
 - This eliminates contamination risks to the face side of the mask between doffing and re-donning episodes
- Perform hand hygiene



To re-don a previously used clear facemask

- Perform hand hygiene
- Grasp mask by the ear loops
 - Pinch clear face mask at the ear loops
- Place over face, **avoid touching the front of the mask**
- Secure ear loops behind the ears
- Secure mask
- Perform hand hygiene

A disposable clear facemask can be worn for several days to weeks when stored safely and when not wet or distorted, and not touched while delivering patient care

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/pandemic-planning.html>