

LMC Healthcare Facial Covering (Masking) Policy and Procedure

Policy #:	INF036	Effective Date:	8/1/2023
Business Unit:	Lakeside Medical Center	Original Effective Date:	8/1/2023
Approval Group:	LMC Infection Control Policy and Procedure		

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to determine when Employees, Patients, Visitors, Students, and Contract Staff are required to wear masks while in the facility and define when a mask opt-out is permitted. This policy is compliant with Florida Rule 59AER23-2 "Standards for the Appropriate Use of Facial Coverings for Infection Control" and the Florida Patient Bill of Rights and Responsibilities (381.026).

For more specific Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for healthcare providers caring for patients with communicable diseases please see our policy "INF05 Communicable Diseases – Exposure and Transmission to and from Patients, Staff and Others Policy and Procedure".

SCOPE

All Lakeside Medical Center patients, employees, visitors, students, and contract staff.

DEFINITIONS

Mask or Facial Covering: a protective barrier placed over the nose and mouth to prevent transmission of airborne or droplet infections. This can include a cloth mask, surgical mask, N95 mask, or face shield.

Droplet Transmission: This occurs when respiratory droplets carrying infectious pathogens transmit infection as they travel directly from the respiratory tract of the infectious individual to susceptible mucosal surfaces of the recipient, generally over short distances, necessitating facial protection. Respiratory droplets are generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, or during procedures like suctioning.

Airborne Transmission: Occurs when either airborne droplet nuclei or small particles containing infectious agents that remain infective over time and distance. Microorganisms carried in this manner may be carried over long distances by air currents and may be inhaled by individuals who have not had face-to-face contact with (or been in the same room with) the infectious individual.

POLICY

To ensure the safety of the patients, staff, and community, it is the policy of Lakeside Medical Center to prevent the spread of communicable diseases through facial coverings when appropriate, while allowing a mask opt-out in specific situations.

For Visitors

Healthcare providers at Lakeside Medical Center may require a facial covering in the following situations:

1. When the visitor is exhibiting signs and symptoms, or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can spread through Droplet or Airborne transmission.
2. When in a sterile area or other setting where sterile procedures are performed.
3. When in the room of a patient exhibiting signs and symptoms, or has a diagnosed infection disease that can be spread through Droplet or Airborne transmission.
4. When visiting a patient whose physician has diagnosed or confirmed a condition that affects the immune system, the risk of transmission of an infection from others (employees or visitors), even without signs and symptoms is increased. In this situation, the physician determines that the use of a facial covering is needed for patient safety.

The visitor may opt-out if an alternative method of infection control/disease prevention is available and safe for the patient, staff, and visitor involved.

Alternatives include: Deferring visitation until the patient is no longer on Droplet/Airborne precautions, leaving the room if a sterile procedure needs to be performed on the patient, physical distancing, or utilizing a virtual form of communication with the patient (including phone or Zoom).

For Employees, Students, and Contract staff: Healthcare providers at Lakeside Medical Center may require a facial covering in the following situations:

1. When conducting sterile procedures
2. When working in a sterile area
3. When working with a patient whose physician has diagnosed or confirmed a condition that affects the immune system, the risk of transmission of an infection from others (employees or visitors), even without signs and symptoms is increased. In this situation, the physician determines that the use of a facial covering is needed for patient safety.
4. When caring for a patient who is on Droplet or Airborne Isolation.
5. When engaging in non-clinical potentially hazardous activities that require facial coverings to prevent physical injury or harm in accordance with industry standards.

Employees, students, and contract staff may not opt out of facial coverings in the above situations due to patient safety concerns.

For Patients

Healthcare providers at Lakeside Medical Center may require a facial covering in the following situations:

1. If the patient is in a common area of the health care setting and is exhibiting signs or symptoms, or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through Droplet or Airborne transmission.

The patient may opt-out if they cannot tolerate a facial covering.

Alternatives include employees wearing a mask while in close contact with the patient, physical distancing for safety purposes, and delaying transport until the patient is able to tolerate masking.

EXCEPTIONS

N/A

RELATED DOCUMENTS	
Related Policy Document(s)	INF05 Communicable Diseases – Exposure and Transmission to and from Patients, Staff and Others Policy and Procedure
Related Forms	
Reference(s)	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Guidelines for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings”, 2007. Florida Emergency Rule from the Agency for Healthcare Administration: 59AER23-2 “Standards for the Appropriate Use of Facial Coverings for Infection Control”, 2023. “Florida Patient Bill of Rights and Responsibilities”, 2011.
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Revision Information/Changes	

APPROVALS	
Reviewer approval	Jennifer Glisson; Kelly Galligher; Jennifer Dorce-Medard; Janet Moreland; Regina All;
Reviewer approval date	10/25/2023
Final approver	Regina All; Darcy Davis;
Final approval date	10/25/2023

This policy is only intended to serve as a general guideline to assist staff in the delivery of patient care; it does not create standard(s) of care or standard(s) of practice. The final decision(s) as to patient management shall be based on the professional judgement of the health care providers(s) involved with the patient, taking into account the circumstances at that time. Any references are to sources, some parts of which were reviewed in connection with formulation of the policy/procedure. The references are not adopted in whole or in part by the hospital(s) or clinic(s) / provider(s).

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