

Talking points for Patients and Visitors during COVID-19

This document outlines ideas and guidance for responding to different scenarios our team members may face with patients and visitors regarding our safety measures in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. *This is for internal use only by Duke Health team members.*

Key Messages



Our top priority is safety, health and well-being of our patients, visitors and team members.



We are committed to protecting you, your loved ones and our team members from the spread of infection.



We are following the safety recommendations from the CDC and our infection prevention experts.

Recommended Answers to Questions

I don't want to wear a face covering, and it's my right to not wear one. The CDC and State of North Carolina no longer require me to wear one since I'm vaccinated. Why do I need to wear a face covering?

We understand the CDC guidelines have changed for the general public regarding masking recommendations. Please keep in mind that this update does not include health care facilities. Along with the State of North Carolina, our guidelines require everyone – patients, visitors and employees – to continue to wear masks in our health care facilities.

Thank you for helping us keep everyone safe.

I can't tolerate wearing a mask.

When you get to your clinic or unit, let the team know that you have trouble wearing a mask for long periods. We will work with you to accommodate your needs.

You may be offered the option of a virtual visit, if appropriate, or an alternative face covering.

I do not have a mask right now.

No problem. We will provide you with a mask at one of our screening locations. Let me show you to the nearest site where you can get a mask.

Does my child need to wear a mask?

The CDC recommends that children over the age of two should wear a face covering.

Is it safe here?

Yes. It is safe to be in our facilities while following our guidelines – including practicing good hand hygiene, maintaining physical distance when possible and wearing a face covering. Our patients and visitors all participate in a health screening before entering the facility, and everyone is required to wear a mask while in our health care facilities.

Why are you limiting who can come in the hospital or clinic?

When fewer people enter our facilities, there is a decreased chance of spreading infection. We also need to limit the number of people who can gather in our spaces and track contacts for everyone who enters our facilities.

What you should say to someone who is not wearing a mask:

I see you're not wearing a face covering. Could you please put one on? If you don't have one, I can get one for you.

Don't forget to wear your mask over your nose and mouth. It's one of the best ways to keep everyone safe.

If the person continues to refuse (get your unit or clinic manager and potentially safety officer involved):

I understand that you don't want to wear a mask, but this is for everyone's safety, and it is our organization's policy. Unfortunately, I cannot allow you to enter our facility without wearing a face covering.

Can I wear my own face covering?

Yes, you can wear your own mask as long as it adequately covers your nose and mouth and does not have exhalation valves. If you have this type of mask, you will receive a Duke-issued mask to replace or wear on top of it.



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