

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. Why do I need to wear a face covering?

Our policy is that everyone must wear a mask while in our clinical environments. In addition to the screening and hand hygiene process when people enter our facilities, wearing a face covering provides critical protection, especially if someone is infected but not showing symptoms.

We wear a mask to protect you. Please wear your face covering to protect us. Wearing a face covering is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infection. For everyone's safety we all need to wear a face covering.

Does my child need to wear a face covering?

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

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. Please keep it on as much as possible.

Why is my temperature being checked?

State regulations recommend that our clinical locations test temperatures to reduce the risk of potential exposure.

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.

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. Everyone participates in a health screening before entering the facility and wears masks.

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

When fewer people enter our facilities, there is a greater likelihood that more patients, visitors and team members will stay safe and well. We also need to limit the number of people who can gather in our spaces and track contacts made for everyone who enters our facilities.

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

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 safety officer involved):

I understand that you don't want to wear one, 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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