

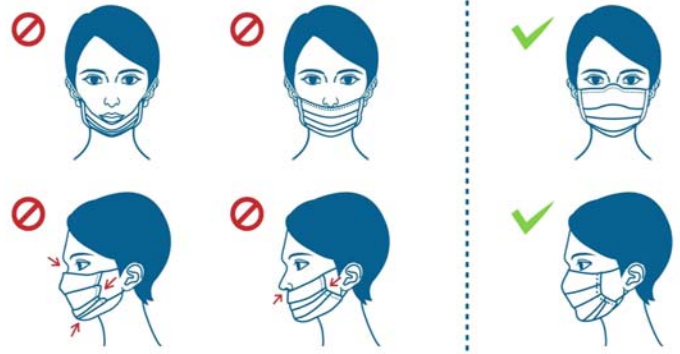
JAM Session 14:

Mask On, Mask Right:

Fixing the

'Neck Mask' Practice

How to wear a face mask correctly



Why this Matters?

Improper procedural mask use becomes a contamination risk and it's important that we correct the practice and reinforce it across all care and non-patient care areas.

During the recent CIHQ mock survey, staff were observed:

- Wearing procedural masks hanging around the neck
- Using masks incorrectly in public hallways, at entry points to procedural areas, and in patient care areas.

This practice: Contaminates the mask. Creates false sense of protection. Violates basic infection prevention principles.

What is Proper Procedural Mask Use?

Mask must:

- ◆ Cover nose and mouth completely
- ◆ Be secured under the chin and snug at the sides
- ◆ Perform hand hygiene before and after handling

Replace mask if:

- ◆ Wet
- ◆ Damaged
- ◆ Soiled
- ◆ Used

What is NOT Acceptable (Observed Practice)

Mask:

- ⇒ Hanging around the neck
- ⇒ Dangling from one ear
- ⇒ Placed on forehead or chin
- ⇒ Reusing a mask after:
 - Touching contaminated surfaces
 - Entering/exiting multiple environments without indication

Key message:

A mask worn incorrectly is equivalent to no mask at all—and may be worse due to contamination.

Why "Neck Masking" is a Problem

- Outer surface becomes contaminated
 - Neck/clothing may transfer organisms back to mask
- Reapplication of the mask exposes:
- Nose/mouth directly to pathogens
 - Violates standard precautions and PPE integrity

Where Masks Should Be Used

Based on:

- Isolation precautions
- Procedural requirements

DISCUSSION Point: "Mask as Personal Preference"

During COVID, masking for self-perceived protection was widely accepted.

Current Practice (Post-Pandemic):

Mask use should be:

- Indication-based, not habitual or decorative
- Staff may still wear masks voluntarily for personal protection, BUT, it Must be worn correctly at all times AND Must follow donning/doffing and disposal rules.

Not for:

- Casual wear in hallways
- Carrying "just in case"
- Improper storage between uses (e.g. pocketed)

Please Clarify to staff:

Allowed: Wearing a mask for personal safety

Not allowed: Improper use (e.g., neck hanging, repeated reuse)

Standard Expectation Moving Forward

If you choose to wear a mask:

Wear it and use it correctly OR remove and discard it!

Managers: Kindly reinforce information shared here during your department rounds and huddles.