Standard Operating Procedure
Yale New Haven Health / Yale Medicine Patient and Visitor Masking Process

Effective Date	Monday 3/1/21
Developed by	System Visitation Committee
Locations	All areas inclusive of YNNHS and YM

Purpose:
To provide a process for entrance screening to ensure that all patients and visitors are adequately in alignment with CDC recommendations.

Protocol:
Facemasks will be provided to all patients and visitors on arrival if they are wearing non-medical masks:
1) Handmade / homemade masks
2) Cloth masks
3) Gaiters
4) Bandanas
5) Masks with exhalation valves.

Only medical-type paper masks are acceptable for single masking (see Appendix D for examples). The additional masks may be worn over the patient or visitor's original mask. Those with a medical mask under a cloth mask do not require additional masking. Front desk staff (screeners / guest services / admitting) will educate patients and visitors to place facemask over current handmade mask.

Process for changing of facemask:
- Patient or visitor will be handed a mask and asked to place new facemask over original facemask.
- We do not encourage patients or visitors to remove original face mask and replace with new face mask
- Exception to the above include a gaiter or bandana, which would not allow a mask to be placed on top. In this case, the patient should be asked to step outside for a moment to exchange to a medical mask.

    IN THE EVENT THE PATIENT or VISITOR IS NOT ACCEPTING OF NEW MASK: Please engage with site lead, manager or patient relations to help discuss the importance of masking. Protective services or security should be engaged when all else fails. Visitors who decline the new mask are not to be allowed in. Patients who decline the new mask should have reasonable accommodations made for them such as having their visit transferred to telehealth or accommodated by clinician/site lead.

Personal Protective Equipment:
- Main Desk, Patient Access and Reception points of contact will have available facemasks for all patients and visitors
- PPE will be worn by all employees as indicated in the YNHHS PPE Policy

Equipment:
- Facemasks supplied to patients at entrance must be high-quality medical masks. They can be ordered as follows:

Delivery Network	Where to Order
Bridgeport Hospital, Greenwich Hospital, Lawrence & Memorial Hospital, Westerly Hospital	YNHHS Intranet Marketplace or INFOR RSS
Northeast Medical Group	McKesson
Yale Medicine	Yale Medicine Supply Chain
Yale New Haven Hospital	YNHHS Intranet Marketplace, INFOR RSS, or 688-9000

APPENDIX A: Scripting for Distributing Masks

Scenario	Scripting
When first giving out the additional facemask.	"It has been shown that wearing a multi-layered, snugly fitting mask with a nose clip provides the best protection to contain any droplets expressed through breathing, talking, sneezing and coughing. I have one here for you to wear on top of yours."
Patient questions the need to wear an additional facemask.	"We recently updated our personal protective equipment policy based on CDC guidelines that state that masks are most effective if well fitted and/or two are worn. We want to make sure we are doing everything we can to keep our patients, visitors, and employees safe."
Patient or visitor explains that the cotton mask they are wearing has multiple layers and meets CDC standards	"Yes, you are probably correct. For the highest safety and easiest way to follow the policy, we are asking you to wear the second mask and help us keep you, all patients, visitors and staff safe. We thank you for understanding." Agree that this is probably true. Acknowledge that we are not able to inspect individual masks and so the simplest policy was to advise the second mask to keep all of our patients, visitors, and staff safe.
Patient states that they are wearing medical mask under cloth mask	If there are visible ties at the edge, then wearing a medical mask under the cotton mask is acceptable.
Patient declines to wear an additional facemask.	"I understand it may feel uncomfortable to wear two masks. This policy was changed to make sure we are using the most current information available to keep you and our staff as safe as possible while you are here. In order for you to come in, we will need you to wear the second mask." A patient may leave and swap out the mask if they feel more comfortable with a single medical mask. Swapping should not occur at entrance. If patient continues to refuse, consult with clinical team as to what accommodations can be offered to the patient.
Visitor declines to wear an additional facemask.	"I understand it may feel uncomfortable to wear two masks. Unfortunately, I will not be able to let you in unless you put on this additional mask. This request is based on new guidelines from the CDC, and is designed to keep all of us as safe as possible." A visitor may leave and swap out the mask if they feel more comfortable with a single medical mask. Swapping should not occur at entrance—they must leave and return.

APPENDIX A: Scripting for Distributing Masks, continued

Scenario	Scripting
Why do I have to do this now? I didn't have to do this last time I was here!	"You're right! We recently adapted our policy based on new CDC guidelines to make sure we're applying the most up-to-date guidance."
Patient questions why employee is only wearing one mask.	"All employees are required to wear a health system provided face mask in all patient care areas. These are snugly fitting multi-layered masks with nose clips and have been vetted to ensure they meet all current guidance."
Patient or visitor moves as if to remove the mask they are wearing to put on the new mask.	"Please don't take the mask you're wearing off. You can put the new mask on over your mask. This helps us keep everyone safe. Thank you!"
Questions about wearing the facemask over their cloth mask because CDC guidelines say that a cloth mask should be worn on top.	"Yes, you're right that those are the CDC guidelines. However, since we're indoors and in close proximity to others here, we ask that you not remove the mask you have on in order to protect those around you."
Patient with a surgical/medical type mask asks for a second mask.	"The CDC guidelines do not recommend wearing two of this type of mask over each other, however if it would make you feel more comfortable you are welcome to have one."

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APPENDIX B: Masking FAQs for Patients and Visitors

Why are you giving out new masks?
It has been shown that wearing a multi-layered, snugly fitting mask with a nose clip provides the best protection to contain any droplets expressed through breathing, talking, sneezing and coughing.

What type is of mask should I wear?
We are asking patients and visitors to wear a face mask (snugly fitting, multi-layered paper mask with nose clip). If you wear a bandana or gaiter, you will be asked to remove that and replace it with a face mask that we provide to you. If you wear a cloth mask, we will ask that you also wear a face mask over that, that we will provide.

My cloth mask has multiple layers, why do I need to add another one?
Your mask may meet the standards to provide adequate protection. Our staff is not able to inspect and assess each individual mask so we are taking an extra step of double masking to ensure we keep all our patients, visitors and staff safe.

Do I need to wear a second mask over a face mask?
You do not need to wear two face masks. One face mask with the nose clip formed to fit your face and straps that fit securely provide adequate containment of respiratory droplets. Double masking with two facemasks has not been shown to provide additional protection.

Don't the CDC guidelines say my cloth mask should be on top?
Yes, however since we are indoors and in close proximity to others, we are asking that you do not remove your mask in order to protect others around you.

Why do I have to do this now? I didn't last time I was here!
You're right. We recently adapted our policy based on new CDC guidelines to make sure we're applying the most up-to-date guidance.

Why are you (employee) only wearing one mask but I have to wear two?
All employees are required to wear a health system provided face mask in all patient care areas. These are snugly fitting multi-layered masks with nose clips, and have been vetted to ensure they meet all current guidance.

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APPENDIX C: Masking FAQs for Employees

What types of masks does YNHHS provide for staff?
YNHHS provides face masks (multi-layered masks made of non-woven material that are disposable), surgical masks (multi-layered masks with fluid resistance), and respirators (devices that snugly cover the nose and mouth with a filtration level of at least 95% of particulate materials).

How do I know which type of face mask to wear for universal masking?
Universal masking requires everyone to wear a face mask while in all YNHHS facilities. The type of mask worn will depend on where you are. Staff in areas that care for patients are to wear a facility provided face mask. Cloth masks may be worn in non-patient care areas. Details can be found in the PPE policy located on the COVID-19 Resource Site: https://www.ynhhs.org/patient-care/covid-19/for-employees/ppe.aspx

Can I wear my own mask?
Clinicians and staff in patient care areas are to wear PPE provided by the facility only. All PPE provided by YNHHS has been vetted to ensure it meets all regulatory requirements and provides the best protection for our staff.

As a health care worker, do I need to double mask?
No. If you are wearing a YNHHS provided mask and ensure that it fits well, there is no need to double mask. New CDC findings found a well-fitted mask with multiple layers reduces the risk of transmitting droplets. Most importantly, a mask should be worn that covers the nose and mouth and fits snugly against the sides of the face.

How can I be sure my mask is fitting well?
Face masks are not designed to be as tight fitting as respirators but should fit well to contain respiratory droplets. Ensure the mask covers both your nose and mouth. Bend the nose wire to conform to the shape of your face. When you are sitting and at rest, you should be able to notice the air you are inhaling and exhaling moving through the filter material of the mask.

How can I improve the fit of my mask?
Everyone's face is different and some strategies may be more helpful for some staff than others. Strategies to help mask fit include selecting a face mask with a nose wire to help this conform to the bridge of the nose, knotting or twisting the ear loops or folding and tucking them under the edge.[1,2] Also, some may find fit to be improved by use of a plastic strap or head band with buttons to hold the loops. Regardless of fit strategy, it is important to ensure breathing is not difficult, vision is not obstructed, and exhaled air goes through the material of the mask and not around the sides.

How do I safely remove my mask?
Handle by the ties or ear loops only. Remove from your face and fold the outside corners together. Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose and mouth when removing. Clean your hands after removing and store in a clean paper bag. Face masks can be generally worn for up to one week and disposed of when soiled or damaged.

References:
1. Brooks JT, Beezhold DH, Noti JD, et al. Maximizing Fit for Cloth and Medical Procedure Masks to Improve Performance and Reduce SARS-CoV-2 Transmission and Exposure, 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* ePub: 10 February 2021. http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7007e1
2. Improve the Fit and Filtration of Your Mask to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/mask-fit-and-filtration.html

Appendix D: Acceptable and Non-Acceptable Masks

Acceptable Masks (examples)
Includes surgical masks, N95, KN95, N95 particulate masks

Non-Acceptable Masks (examples)
Anyone wearing a mask like this would need to receive a second mask to wear
Includes masks with valves, gaiters, bandanas, and cloth masks