

# Pembroke Regional Hospital

# MEMO

**To:** All Staff and Physicians  
**From:** Infection Prevention and Control and Occupational Health and Safety  
**Date:** April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
**Subject:** Changes to Universal Masking Requirements

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Effective today, universal masking will no longer be **required** in any area of the hospital. This decision was made based on COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses continuing to stabilize within our hospital and the community.

PRH will continue to be a mask friendly space. Individuals who prefer to mask will have the option to do so. Masks will remain readily available at all hospital entrances and within each department.

## When must you wear a mask?

- Based on a Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA).
- When providing care to patients on isolation precautions, according to the posted signage.
- When returning to work after feeling unwell (under work self-isolation).
- If asked to wear a mask by a patient.

In alignment with best practice, once a mask has been removed it must be immediately discarded and not retained or reused.

As we make this change, it is important to remember the basic principles of Infection Prevention and Control that must be followed with every day practice. This includes:

- Proper patient screening for new onset respiratory symptoms using the ARI screening form or patient assessment;
- Initiation of additional precautions according to patient symptoms;
- Identifying patient isolation/ infection control requirements on the SBAR transfer form, and;
- Posting additional precaution signage at the entrance to patient environments (including after intra-facility transfer).

Ensuring that these safety practices are met, along with the four moments of hand hygiene and PPE as indicated by posted isolation signage will help reduce the risk of respiratory illness transmission at PRH and keep our staff and patients safe.

Please note, in the event of a respiratory illness outbreak at PRH, universal masking will be reinstated on the affected unit for the duration of the outbreak.

Moving forward, PRH will continue to monitor community respiratory illness indicators and make any additional adjustments as required.