

Mount Sinai

MEDICAL CENTER

Respiratory Hygiene and Facial Coverings Policy

Purpose:

To prevent the transmission of **all** respiratory infections in any healthcare setting at Mount Sinai Medical Center (MSMC). The following infection control measures should be implemented at the first point of contact with a potentially infected person and incorporated into infection control practices as a component of *Standard Precautions, 4.2.013*.

Scope:

Patients, Visitors, and Employees

Policy:

Patients, Visitors, and Employees will be informed of respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette and facial covering use expectations. MSMC will ensure the availability of materials for Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette and Facial Coverings at entrances, and in waiting areas or outpatient settings, for patients, visitors, and employees.

Definitions:

Common Area - refers to areas in a healthcare setting where patients are not treated, diagnosed, or examined, e.g., hallways, waiting rooms, cafeteria, etc.

Employee - refers to any person under employment or contract of MSMC, including providers, practitioners, administrative staff, maintenance staff, aides, contractors, students, and volunteers.

Facial Covering - any mask that covers the nose and mouth, i.e., Procedure Mask, Surgical Mask, or N95 Respirators.

Hand Hygiene - cleaning hands using a 70% alcohol-based hand rub or, where sinks are available, washing hands using soap, water, and disposable towels.

Health Care Setting - refers to any physical location where care is provided to patients at MSMC.

Immunosuppression - a condition affecting a person's immune system in a manner that is known to increase the risk of transmission of an infection, even when no signs or symptoms of an infection are present.

Patient - refers to any person receiving care and services from MSMC or a MSMC facility.

Materials for adhering to Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette and Facial Covering Use - Facial coverings, tissues, no-touch waste containers for disposal of used tissues, and hand hygiene products.

Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette (RH/CE) - measures to contain respiratory secretions by individuals with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection.

Sterile Areas - refers to locations where surgery is conducted, or procedures requiring aseptic techniques are performed at MSMC.

Sterile Procedure - refers to aseptic procedures performed in an environment or manner to minimize the risk of microbial contamination and reduce invasive or surgical site infection rates.

Symptoms of a Respiratory Infection - coughing, sneezing, stuffy or running nose, sore throat, headache, muscle ache, breathlessness (tight chest or wheezing), high temperature, or feeling generally unwell.

Visitor - refers to any person at MSMC who is not an employee or patient of MSMC.

Procedure:

Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette (RH/CE) and Facial Covering Use Expectations

- A. Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette (RH/CE) Measures
 - i. Materials needed for Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette, e.g., tissues, alcohol based hand sanitizer, and facial coverings, will be available at MSMC facilities.
 - a. If you do not see these materials, please ask MSMC staff for assistance in obtaining what you need.
 - ii. Containment of Respiratory Secretions
 - a. Cover our mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
 - b. Dispose of the tissue in the nearest waste receptacle after use.
 - iii. Perform hand hygiene after having contact with:
 - a. Respiratory Secretions, or
 - b. Contaminated objects or materials.
- B. Facial Covering Use Expectations
 - i. Patients
 - a. Only required to wear a facial covering when the patient is:
 - 1. in a common area of the facility, **AND**
 - 2. exhibiting signs or symptoms of an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission, **OR**
 - 3. diagnosed with an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission.
 - b. Opting-Out of wearing a facial covering is only allowed when:
 - 1. the above conditions are not met, **AND**
 - 2. when under the Florida Patient Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, section 381.026, FS,
 - i. the requirement for wearing the facial covering exceeds the allowed scope of the facility's rules and regulations affecting patient care and conduct the patient is responsible for following, **OR**
 - ii. opting-out would infringe on the rights of other patients, visitors, or staff of MSMC or would risk the safety or health of the same.
 - ii. Visitors
 - a. Only required to wear a facial covering when the visitor is:
 - 1. exhibiting signs or symptoms of an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission, **OR**
 - 2. diagnosed with an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission, **OR**

3. in sterile areas of the facility, **OR**
 4. in an area where sterile procedures are being performed, **OR**
 5. in an in-patient or clinical room with a patient who is:
 - i. exhibiting signs or symptoms of an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission, **or**
 - ii. diagnosed with an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission, **OR**
 6. visiting a patient diagnosed with (or confirmed to have a condition that causes) immunosuppression **and** whose treating practitioner has determined that using facial coverings is necessary for the patient's safety.
- b. Opting-Out of wearing a facial covering is allowed only if an alternative infection control or infectious disease prevention method is available.
- iii. Employees
- a. Only required to wear a facial covering when the employee is:
 1. conducting sterile procedures, **OR**
 2. working in a sterile area, **OR**
 3. working with a patient diagnosed with (or confirmed to have a condition that causes) immunosuppression **and** whose treating practitioner has determined that using facial coverings is necessary for the patient's safety, **OR**
 4. working with a patient on droplet, enhanced droplet, or airborne isolation, **OR**
 - i. to include aerosol generating procedures, such as, intubation or collection of sputum specimens
 5. engaging in non-clinical, potentially hazardous activities requiring facial coverings to prevent physical injury or harm per industry standards.
 - b. If sick with a communicable respiratory illness or an airborne spread disease, Employee Health will follow any Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines or recommendations for healthcare workers returning to work, including masking requirements. Opting out of this masking request will result in the employee not being allowed to return to work until after the conclusion of the infectious period.
 - c. Opting-Out of wearing a facial covering is allowed only when the above conditions are not met.
 - d. Droplet Precautions Advisory
 1. Employees are advised, in an abundance of caution, to wear a procedure or surgical mask for close contact when examining a patient with symptoms of a respiratory infection (particularly if fever is present) until it is determined that the cause of symptoms is not an infectious agent that requires Droplet Precautions (see *Transmission-Based Precautions and Isolation, 4.2.002*).
- iv. MSMC reserves the right to consider other exclusions from the opt-out provisions in order to comply with applicable state and federal laws, rules, requirements, and regulations.
- C. Separation or Social Distancing
- i. When space and chair availability permit, encourage coughing persons to sit at least 3 feet away from others in common waiting areas.

Reference:

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