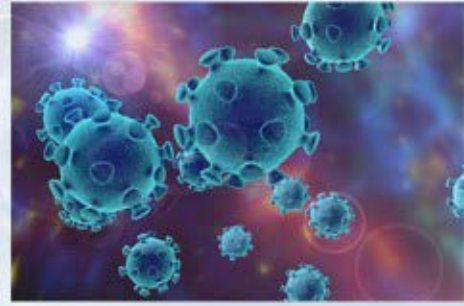


# COVID-19 Update

## Employee and Physician Information



## Memo from Infection Prevention and Control

February 15, 2021

### ***Re: Masking for Patients and Residents of Eastern Health***

In light of the new community spread of COVID-19, the recommendation from the Public Health Agency of Canada Infection Prevention and Control (PHAC IPAC) for guidance around masking during widespread community transmission was to mask patients and residents outside their bedspace (while in public areas such as corridors). Due to the presence of the B117 variant, additional measures to ensure the safety of staff, patients, and residents is of the utmost importance.

Infection Control guidance requires that medical masks are to be worn by all patients and residents when they are within the facility, but outside of their room or bedspace or when they are within 2 meters of other individuals (e.g., when staff enter their single-bed room and in multi-bed rooms), while awake and where tolerated, and should also adhere to the following:

- Masks should not be used for patients or residents who have difficulty breathing or who are unable to remove the mask on their own (e.g., due to decreased level of consciousness, physical ability, young age, mental illness, or cognitive impairment).
- Where masks cannot be worn, every effort should be made to maximize the distance (with a minimum of 2 meters) between patients or residents and to ensure that barriers (e.g., plastic barriers or at least privacy curtains) are in place.
- Staff should be educated that patient and resident masking is just one layer of protection aimed at reducing overall transmission of COVID-19 within healthcare facilities, and that an individual patient or resident's inability to mask should in no way affect the care that they are provided.
- For further guidance on patients and residents who are unable to wear a mask, please refer to the [Infection Control Guideline 022. IPAC Guidelines For Inpatients, Residents, Clients, and Visitors who Cannot Wear a Mask - Feb 14, 2021.](#)

**Carla St. Croix**

Regional Director, Infection Prevention and Control

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Report all potential communicable diseases to Occupational Health: 709-777-7777, line 3, line 2, or email [occhealth@easternhealth.ca](mailto:occhealth@easternhealth.ca).

[covid19.inquiries@easternhealth.ca](mailto:covid19.inquiries@easternhealth.ca) | Navigator Line: 709-752-3663 (M-S 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) | [www.easternhealth.ca/covid19](http://www.easternhealth.ca/covid19) | [COVID-19 Intranet page](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)