

Face Masks/Coverings

ISSUED SEPTEMBER 2020

In line with government guidance, face masks/coverings must now be worn on entry to all three hospitals in the Western Isles, by all staff (regardless of role), visitors, and those attending outpatient appointments. This is to protect our staff, patients and visitors due to the increased opportunity for the transmission of COVID-19 since lockdown has eased. **Face masks must continue to be worn in all clinical areas.**

1. Where do face masks/coverings have to be worn?

Face masks/coverings have to be worn on entry to Western Isles Hospital, Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh and St Brendan's Hospital.

2. Who has to wear a face mask/covering?

A. Anyone entering or within any of our hospitals will have to wear a face mask/covering, with the exception of inpatients, and those exempt from wearing a mask.

3. Why do we have to wear face masks/coverings?

A. Face masks/coverings have to be worn as a preventative measure to help prevent cross infection. Face masks/coverings are an additional measure in place and do not replace physical distancing, or hygiene measures.

4. Can I wear my own face covering?

A. In clinical areas of the hospital you **must** wear the clinical face mask provided. In all other areas of the hospital, you may wear your own face covering if you prefer.

5. Will face masks/coverings be provided?

A. Face masks have to be worn in clinical areas and are available at entry points, and at additional PPE stations throughout sites. Face coverings are not provided.

6. Why can I not use my own face covering?

A. You can wear your own face covering in non-clinical areas. Our position is to issue you with a new, clean face mask upon entry to a clinical area.

7. What if I don't want to wear a face mask/covering?

A. You will not be permitted to enter any of our hospitals if you choose not to wear a mask/covering.

8. Will I have to wear the face mask/covering in my office if I am office based?

A. If you work alone in your office, you do not have to wear a face mask/covering whilst in your office.

9. What if I share an office?

A. If you cannot physically distance in the office (2 metres) you should continue to wear a face mask/covering.

10. Must a mask/covering be worn in the corridors?

A. A face mask/covering must be worn in corridors.

11. Do I wear a mask/covering for a virtual clinic?

No. unless the environment you are in is shared by others and calls for one.

12. Do children have to wear a face mask/covering?

A. Children u5 do not have to wear a face mask/covering.

13. Do I have to wear a mask/covering in the canteen?

A. You do not have to wear a mask whilst seated in the canteen unless you choose to do so. You will be expected to wear a mask/covering at all other times in the canteen.

14. What if I need to eat or drink?

A. You can remove your face covering/mask to eat/drink. Face masks must be disposed of and a new mask used after eating/drinking.

15. How long can I wear the mask for and when should it be changed?

A. Staff should change their mask regularly in line with existing PPE guidance. Face masks can be worn on a sessional basis for up to four hours, and between patient care episodes or tasks where the mask is intact, comfortable, dry and free from any visible contamination.

For visitors/those attending appointments, you should wear your face mask for the duration of your visit/appointment.

16. Are there any exceptional circumstances when staff may not wear a mask?

There may be certain exceptional circumstances, based on the client/patient group you are working with, where wearing a mask may not be appropriate. You should discuss all such situations with your line manager, and agree what adaptations are appropriate in the circumstances.

17. What about patients and visitors?

A. Inpatients do not need to wear masks in their room/ward. Staff and visitors to areas do.

Visitors will also be required to wear masks/coverings on entering the hospital. Visitors who do not want to wear a mask will not be permitted access and a new Designated Visitor/Essential Visitor will require to be sought. Visitors and those attending outpatient appointments must wear a face mask (provided) in clinical areas.

18. What if I can't wear a mask?

A. There are health condition exemptions, for example, if you have autism, dementia, a learning disability, or a disability that prevents you from wearing a face covering.

19. Who can I get advice from?

A. In the first instance, staff can get advice from your line manager, or the Infection Prevention and Control Department.

Visitors/patients can ask staff any questions.