

AHS PPE Taskforce Guidance

Topic: Use of N95 Respirators for Patients Without COVID-19

Date: April 07, 2020

Protection of our staff, physicians and volunteers from exposure to COVID-19 at work is the #1 priority of AHS. The Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA) is a fundamental component of every single patient interaction. On the basis of this PCRA, we support the decisions of our frontline staff and physicians to choose Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) appropriate to the risk and planned healthcare interventions. Droplet and Contact precautions are recommended for most interactions with individuals confirmed or potentially infected with COVID-19.

Question 1: Should I use an N95 Respirator for patients without COVID-19? *Responsive Guidance from the AHS PPE Task Force:*

The approach to patients with Respiratory Illness, Influenza-Like Illness or COVID-19 requires careful attention to Droplet and Contact Precautions to protect staff and patients.

A fit-tested and seal-checked N95 Respirator should be substituted for a procedure mask only when performing procedures with potential to generate infectious aerosols (AGMPs) as defined in:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/hi-ipc-respiratory-additional-precautions-assessment.pdf>

It is critical that use of N95 Respirators be considered carefully and used appropriately to ensure that they remain available to us as the number of patients with COVID-19 increases.

Use of N95 Respirators for anything other than airborne infectious diseases (Tuberculosis, Measles and Varicella-Zoster) or AGMPs for patients isolated for COVID-19 is not evidence-based, is not appropriate and could put staff and physicians at risk by creating future shortages.