



Memo

CORA Physical Therapy

To: All Employees
From: Coronavirus Response Team
Date: April 1, 2020
Re: Mask usage

CORA's Coronavirus Response Team continues to design policies and procedures in compliance with all CDC guidelines and recommendations in order to best protect our employees and patients. Information is updated daily and revised as needed per the CDC. Please see below for our current position on the use of masks in the clinics.

The following information is taken directly from [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov):

“CDC does not recommend the routine use of respirators outside of workplace settings (in the community). Most often, spread of respiratory viruses from person-to-person happens among close contacts (within 6 feet). *CDC recommends everyday preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, such as avoiding people who are sick, avoiding touching your eyes or nose, and covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue. People who are sick should stay home and not go into crowded public places or visit people in hospitals. Workers who are sick should follow CDC guidelines and stay home when they are sick.*”

N95 respirators are used by healthcare personnel who are on the frontlines treating patients who are confirmed positive and presumed positive. A fit test is required as well as a Respiratory Protection Program that meets NIOSH guidelines. Not everyone is able to wear a respirator due to medical conditions that may be made worse when breathing through a respirator. Before using a respirator or getting fit-tested, workers must have a medical evaluation to make sure that they are able to wear a respirator safely. CORA does not meet the requirements to provide N95 respirators, nor do we provide the kind of care to patients that would warrant the need for them.

The CDC recommendation for facemasks is:

Wear a facemask if you are sick

1. If you are sick: You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room. Learn what to do if you are sick.
2. If you are NOT sick: You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

**Please note that our policy prohibits anyone with signs or symptoms of illness from coming into the clinic.*

The CDC's guidance for what hospitals should do in crisis:

Prioritize facemasks for selected activities such as:

- For provision of essential surgeries and procedures
- During care activities where splashes and sprays are anticipated
- During activities where prolonged face-to-face or close contact with a potentially infectious patient is unavoidable
- For performing aerosol generating procedures, if respirators are no longer available

**Again, under no circumstances should any of the above situations occur in a CORA clinic.*

CORA has implemented all CDC precautionary guidelines to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Providing face masks to asymptomatic patients or employees is not recommended at this time by the CDC, however they have recommended the wearing of cloth face coverings when out in public. The daily screening of patients/employees for symptoms, enhanced disinfecting procedures and hand hygiene, and the social distancing guidelines implemented in the clinic are all ways we are meeting the guidelines set forth by the CDC.

CDC on Homemade Cloth Face Coverings

CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission.

CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Please note, the CDC does not state that covering the face will protect anyone from contracting the disease but rather limit an individual from transmitting the disease. ***CORA highly encourages employees and patients to come to the clinic with a face covering (not a surgical mask or respirator) to potentially limit the spread of the disease to others.***

Exception: *If the local jurisdiction where your clinic resides mandates wearing of cloth face coverings or surgical masks while in public or in the clinic, then those employees shall wear at all times while in the clinic.*

Any clinicians who have had close contact with a confirmed case or PUI, should wear a cloth mask in the clinic at all times and continue to monitor themselves for symptoms. They should also report the potential exposure to the coronavirusinfo@corahealth.com email for determination of any further action needed.

Thank you and please send all questions to coronavirusinfo@corahealth.com.

Revised 4/27/2020