

Masking Update 2/14/23

Definitions:

- **Universal Source Control** refers to use of facemasks (N95, KN95, surgical, procedural mask) to cover a person's mouth and nose to prevent spread of respiratory secretions when they are breathing, talking, sneezing, or coughing.
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**: Masks, eye protection, gown, and gloves, used to protect the health care worker and prevent the transmission of infection.
- **COVID-19 Community Levels** to determine the impact of COVID-19 on communities
- **Transmission Levels (also known as Community Transmission)** to describe the amount of COVID-19 spread within each county. **Healthcare facilities use Transmission Levels to determine infection control interventions.**
- **Well-defined areas: a location** where there is no reasonable expectation that any patients, visitors or members of the public would be.

Recommendations: Masking for **SOURCE CONTROL ONLY**, **masking for PPE (droplet and airborne precautions) must be followed according to policy.**

| Setting | Community Transmission Rate | |
|--|--|--|
| | High | Not High |
| Patient Care Areas | REQUIRED (N95 for high-risk units (ED) and AGPs) | OPTIONAL (with the following exceptions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required if you did not receive a Flu shot this season (DOH Mandate). • Required for specific individuals as described below. • Highly encouraged when there is increased activity of other viruses that cause severe respiratory infections, e.g., influenza (when activity is moderate or higher), RSV, etc. |
| Well-defined areas (Non-patient Care areas/ Not open to general public) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REQUIRED if the Transmission Levels and the COVID-19 Community Levels are both HIGH <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPTIONAL if the Transmission Levels are HIGH, but the COVID-19 Community Levels are NOT HIGH | OPTIONAL (with the following exceptions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required if you did not receive a Flu shot this season (DOH Mandate). • Required for specific individuals as described below. <p>Highly encouraged when there is increased activity of other viruses that cause severe respiratory infections, e.g., influenza (when activity is moderate or higher), RSV, etc.</p> |
| Public Spaces (e.g., cafeteria, gift shop, waiting rooms, hallways) | REQUIRED | OPTIONAL (with the following exceptions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required if you did not receive a Flu shot this season (DOH Mandate). • Required for specific individuals as described below. <p>Highly encouraged when there is increased activity of other viruses that cause severe respiratory infections, e.g., influenza (when activity is moderate or higher), RSV, etc.</p> |

Individuals REQUIRING masks, regardless of transmission rates:

- Those who have had close contact exposure or a higher-risk exposure (colleagues) with someone with COVID-19 infection, for 10 days after their exposure.
- Reside or work on a unit or area of the ministry experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak.
 - universal use of source control as a mitigation measure could be discontinued in units with an outbreak once no new cases have been identified for 14 days.
- Have otherwise had source control recommended by public health authorities.
- Are moderately or severely immunocompromised
- For direct care of patients who are moderate or severely immunocompromised

Moderately or severely immunocompromised:

- Active treatment for solid tumor and hematologic malignancies
- Receipt of solid-organ transplant or an islet transplant and taking immunosuppressive therapy
- Receipt of chimeric antigen receptor (CAR)-T-cell therapy or hematopoietic cell transplant (HCT) (within 2 years of transplantation or taking immunosuppressive therapy)
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (e.g., common variable immunodeficiency disease, severe combined immunodeficiency, DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced HIV infection (people with HIV and CD4 cell counts less than 200/mm³, history of an AIDS-defining illness without immune reconstitution, or clinical manifestations of symptomatic HIV) or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids (i.e., 20 mg or more of prednisone or equivalent per day when administered for 2 or more weeks), alkylating agents, antimetabolites, transplant-related immunosuppressive drugs, cancer chemotherapeutic agents classified as severely immunosuppressive, tumor necrosis factor (TNF) blockers, and other biologic agents that are immunosuppressive or immunomodulatory (e.g., B-cell-depleting agents)
- NICU

References:

[ppe-guide-booklet.pdf \(trinity-health.org\)](#)

[Infection Control: Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 \(SARS-CoV-2\) | CDC](#)

HIGH Transmission Masking Signage: [masks-required-8-5x11.pdf \(trinity-health.org\)](#)

NOT HIGH Transmission Masking Signage: [masking-optional-8-5x11.pdf \(trinity-health.org\)](#)

Masking FAQs

Q1: Do I still need to wear a mask if I'm taking care of a patient with COVID, Flu or TB?

A1: ABSOLUTELY! This masking update only refers to source control. Procedural masks, N95/respirators, eye protection and all other PPE is REQUIRED based on our transmission-based precaution policies. If there are any questions at all, please reach out to your infection prevention team.

Q2: If I didn't receive my flu shot this year, do I still need to mask even if we are in the "optional" range?

A2: Yes, according to a separate section of the NYSDOH Sanitary Code, all healthcare workers who did not receive a flu vaccine for the current flu season must wear a procedural mask until the New York State Health Commissioner declares the flu season to be over. [Regulation for Prevention of Influenza Transmission by Healthcare and Residential Facility and Agency Personnel \(ny.gov\)](https://www.nysdoh.gov/Regulation-for-Prevention-of-Influenza-Transmission-by-Healthcare-and-Residential-Facility-and-Agency-Personnel)

Q3: What is the definition of a "well-defined area" and what are some examples?

A3: Well-defined area is a location where there is no reasonable expectation that any patients, visitors, or members of the public would be.

- Kitchen (non-patient, non-resident, non-participant, non-public facing)
- Laboratory (except draw stations and specimen drop-off)
- Pharmacy (except when dealing with the patients/public)
- Administrative/Office buildings, suites and associated hallways that are non-clinical and not open to the public.
- Linen and Dock
- Distribution
- Facilities/Biomed offices
- Heart Central
- Hub/Logistics

Q4: If I work in a "well-defined area" does that mean I don't need a mask when I'm walking around the hospital or visiting a clinical unit?

A4: No, regardless of where you work, if we are in a **HIGH transmission level**, masking is **REQUIRED** in all public and clinical areas.

Q5: I'm still confused about "Well-defined areas", who should I contact to find out if my area qualifies?

A5: Please work with your Infection Prevention team to determine any masking decisions for your area.

Q6: How will I know what level we are at?

A6: We will be posting the current transmission levels on the Intranet site with a link this guidance, in addition, there will be signage directing colleagues, patients and visitors if masking is required or optional.

Q7: Does this mean I don't need to wear eye protection anymore?

A7: Eye-protection is **HIGHLY** recommended for exposure protection whenever masking is required for patient care and should always be worn as part of standard precautions if there is any chance for a bodily fluid splash.

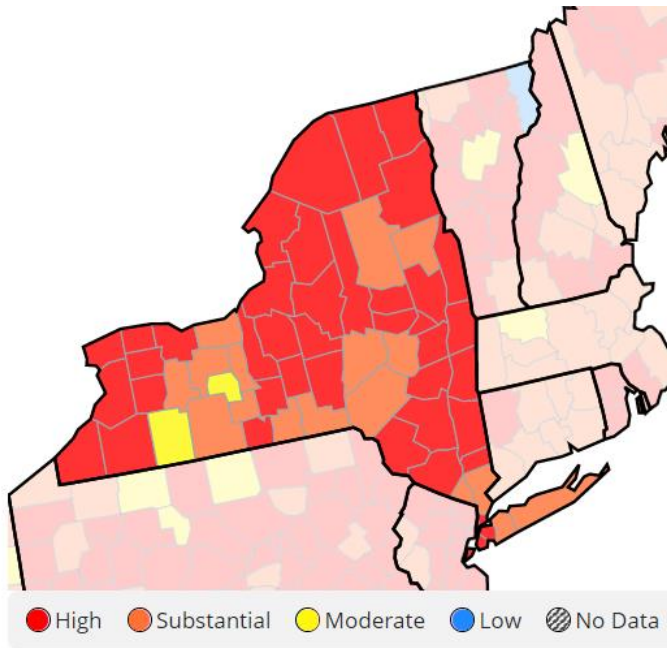
Intranet Graphic:

Guidelines for Masking in all Healthcare Settings

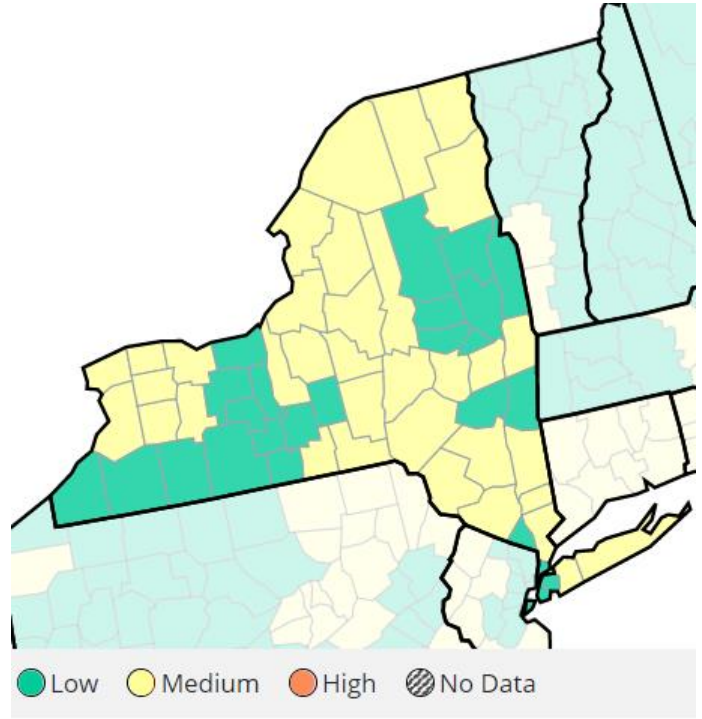
Updated every Thursday

(EXAMPLES ONLY – See CDC site)

Transmission Level:



Community Level:



| | Community Transmission Rate | Community Level |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Masking REQUIRED at <u>ALL</u> locations | High | High |
| Masking REQUIRED in all <u>clinical and public spaces</u> . | | |
| Masking OPTIONAL in <u>well-defined areas</u> where there is no expectation for patient or the public to be | High | Not High |
| Masking OPTIONAL with <u>exceptions</u> . <u>Please see full guidance document.</u> | Not High | Not High |

**COVID-19 Community Transmission
Rate for this county is currently:**

HIGH

MASKS REQUIRED

**on all patients, visitors,
colleagues and physicians**

Acceptable Face Coverings



Surgical or KN95 only

Unacceptable Face Coverings



Neck Gaiter

Bandana

Cloth Mask

Masking may be optional for colleagues in designated areas when the COVID Transmission Rate for this area is high but the COVID Community Level is not high.

Follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) masking guidance for health care settings:
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-after-vaccination.html

**Based on the current COVID
Community Transmission Rate
for this county:**

MASKING IS OPTIONAL

Masking is required in some locations.
See signage in designated areas.



MASKING IS REQUIRED:

- If you must enter the facility and have any COVID-19-related symptoms
- For colleagues working in designated areas or if caring for immunocompromised patients

MASKING IS ENCOURAGED:

- If you are immunocompromised

(Masking remains optional when the COVID Transmission Rate for this area is high but the COVID Community Level is not high.)