

PEMBROKE REGIONAL HOSPITAL

MEMO

TO: All Staff and Physicians

FROM: Infection Prevention and Control and Occupational Health and Safety

DATE: April 8th, 2021

SUBJECT: Universal Eye Protection Updates and Reminders

Within our region and our community, there has been a rapid increase in COVID-19 transmission and increasing risks posed by the COVID-19 variants. As always, it is imperative that staff and physicians complete a Point-of-Care Risk Assessment (PCRA) prior to each patient interaction in order to select the personal protective equipment (PPE) that is required to safely perform a task. The PCRA must be based on patient's condition, existing isolation status, and the activity to be conducted. Staff and physicians are reminded to follow PRH protocols for universal masking and eye protection. **Eye protection must be worn at all times within clinical areas, this includes nursing stations.**

Due to the increasing rates of COVID-19 transmission, increased severity of illness and risks associated with the COVID-19 variants, the following PPE updates are effective immediately:





1. Staff interacting with COVID-19 positive patients who are under droplet + contact precautions, **MUST** choose a face shield or goggles for eye protection. Safety glasses must not be used when providing care to these patients.
2. Staff performing an aerosol generating medical procedure (AGMP) **MUST** use a face shield or goggles for eye protection. Safety glasses are not approved for this indication. Face shields are the preferred choice for eye protection during an AGMP.
3. **Face shields are the preferred option for eye protection when caring for patients under COVID-19 Droplet + Contact Precautions.**

COVID-19 Protective Eyewear Guidance:

1. Always perform a PCRA prior to patient interaction to determine what PPE is required. Select eye protection as indicated for the task you will be performing.
2. Protective eyewear must be worn at all times within clinical areas.
3. If you wear prescription glasses, select a face shield or goggles that fit snugly, with no gaps between the protective equipment and your face.

4. Eye protection must be cleaned, prior to changing medical mask or respirator, when going for breaks or meals, and at the end of shift. As needed, replace eye protection when it becomes soiled or damaged.
5. In non-clinical areas, staff must continue to follow universal masking guidelines and utilize eye protection based on departmental protocols or individual risk assessments.

Choosing Eye Protection Based on Task/ Care to be provided:

Options	Consideration in Selection
Goggles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goggles that fit snug around the eyes provide the most reliable protection from splashes, sprays and respiratory droplets. Goggles can be re-used by the same user for the duration of a shift but must be cleaned/ disinfected each time they are removed. The characteristics of goggles that make them the most reliable protection for the wearer can cause discomfort when wearing them for extended periods of time.
Face Shields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face shields are the preferred method of eye protection during the COVID-19 pandemic as they cover the maximum area of the face to reduce exposure from splash, spray or droplets to both the eyes and face. Face shields must be used for eye protection during aerosol generating medical procedures (AGMP). A single use face shield can be re-used by the same user for the duration of a shift until it becomes damaged or visibly compromised.
Safety Glasses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety Glasses do not provide the same level of protection from splashes, sprays and droplets as goggles or face shields. Safety glasses are not recommended for interactions involving direct patient contact where the patient is unmasked or during AGMPs. Safety glasses must fit snugly and gaps between the edges of the glasses and face must be kept to a minimum. Safety glasses used for universal eye protection must be a PRH approved version of eye protection. See PRH approved safety glasses guide (attached)
Mask with Visor 	Masks with visor may not provide the same level of protection from splashes, sprays or droplets as goggles or face shields.

Updated guidance from Public Health Ontario identifies that the higher transmissibility rates resulting from the variants of concern, suggest that for a given exposure there is greater likelihood of infection. Adherence to infection control and PPE measures is paramount in the protection of the health and safety of our health care workers and community. Staff who are observed to be non-compliant with Infection Control/ Occupational Health and Safety protocols will be subject to a structured disciplinary process.

Please remember, as evidence evolves our policies and procedures may change.

For more information, refer to the “Universal Masking and Eye Protection During the COVID-19 Pandemic” policy.

Thank you