

# COVID-19 Universal Eye Protection for all Patient Facing Staff – July 28, 2020 1117

Spectrum Health contact Jessica McClusky

## **Situation**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released new guidance regarding eye protection use for all healthcare providers working with any patient in areas with moderate to substantial community transmission of COVID-19. At this time, the Grand Rapids region is labeled “High Risk” for disease transmission.

## **Background**

Spectrum Health is committed to providing a safe working environment for our team members during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Spectrum Health has continued to adopt its personal protective equipment (PPE) policies based upon high quality scientific evidence and published guidelines. As an understanding of COVID-19 transmission evolves, the role of disease spread by asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic individuals continues to gain importance. To help prevent asymptomatic transmission of COVID in our hospitals and clinics, we have been universally masking since April. While a facemask provides a level of protection from transmission of COVID-19 for the individual wearing the mask and those around them, the mask leaves the eyes exposed as a potential site for viral entry.

## **Assessment**

Eye protection prevents direct inoculation from droplet spread and prevents individuals from touching their own eyes. Research has shown that face shields can reduce exposure to viruses by over 90% when worn by healthcare professionals. Even though patients and visitors are asked to wear face masks while they are in Spectrum Health facilities, some individuals forget or are unable to wear a mask consistently.

## **Recommendation**

Spectrum Health is requiring all patient facing team members to wear eye protection such as a face shield, goggles, or surgical eye wear, during all patient care interactions. Staff members are asked to implement this practice as soon as supplies are available in their area and no later than August 4, 2020. Universal eye protection for all patient care provides an additional layer of protection for Spectrum Health team members to help ensure safe patient care during this pandemic.

- All employees, including non-clinical employees, may request eye protection as supplies allow.
- Face shields and goggles will be distributed to all areas where patient facing care is provided. Department leaders will work with supply chain liaisons to order for their areas.
- Information regarding disinfection and storage of face shields and goggles will be provided in additional documentation.
- Guidelines for use of face shields during care of patients suspected or known to have COVID-19 remain unchanged.
- Any eye protection brought in from home must follow the guidelines established in the “PPE from home” policy.
- Regular eyeglasses and contact lenses do not provide adequate eye protection and would not be considered PPE.

## **Supporting Documentation**

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2765525>

<https://www.mistartmap.info/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>:

**HCP working in facilities located in areas with moderate to substantial community transmission** are more likely to encounter asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection. If SARS-CoV-2 infection is not suspected in a patient presenting for care (based on symptom and exposure history), HCP should follow [Standard Precautions](#) (and [Transmission-Based Precautions](#) if required based on the suspected diagnosis).

They should also **wear eye protection in addition to their facemask** to ensure the eyes, nose, and mouth are all protected from exposure to respiratory secretions during patient care encounters.