

## **COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What is the benefit of using the PPE during aerosol-generating procedures with patients who are known negative for COVID-19?**

Because of COVID-19 incubation times, a patient who has tested negative on one day could test positive on another. Wearing the right PPE during aerosol-generating procedures (AGP) for all patients can help minimize your risk of exposure to the virus.

### **2. In what situations should eye protection be used?**

Protective eyewear (i.e., goggles or a face shield) offers effective protection against COVID-19 infection. When performing AGPs and positioned within 6 feet of an individual who is unable to wear a procedure mask, regardless of the patient's COVID-19 status, protective eyewear must be worn to prevent possible exposure. In addition, protective eyewear must be worn during all interactions with suspect and confirmed COVID-19 patients.

### **3. Am I required to wear protective eyewear at all times during patient-facing encounters?**

No, however please note that although universal eye protection for all patient facing encounters is not currently mandated, it is strongly encouraged. This will decrease the risk of transmission.

### **4. Can I supply my own N95 respirator or procedure mask?**

Team members are permitted to use only a Northwell-supplied procedure mask and N95 respirator. For information about the use of Envo mask N95 respirators by team members who are not required to wear an N95 respirator while performing their job duties, see no. 7 below.

### **5. Can I decorate my N95 respirator or procedure mask?**

No, masks and respirators should never be decorated or altered with markings in any way, as this may adversely affect the integrity of the mask.

### **6. Can cloth masks be worn instead of a procedural mask?**

No, cloth masks alone do not provide adequate respiratory protection and should only be used when a procedural mask is worn over it.

### **7. What if I prefer the Envo mask N95 Respirator over the Northwell-supplied N95s?**

We recognize that many team members find the Envo mask N95 to be more comfortable than the standard N95 respirator. Although the Envo N95 is NIOSH approved, its protection factor is half that of the standard, Northwell-supplied N95 respirator, and daily filter change requirements and face-fitting limitations add to its safety concerns. As previously communicated, team members who are required to wear N95 respirators while performing their job responsibilities are not permitted to use PPE of any type that is not supplied by Northwell, including Envo N95s. Team members who are not required to wear N95 respirators while performing their job responsibilities but choose to wear an Envo N95 are permitted to do so only if they also don a surgical mask issued by Northwell over the Envo N95.

**8. Do I need to wear a mask and practice social distancing in employee-only conference rooms, break rooms and cafeterias?**

Yes, infection prevention protocols – including mask wearing and social distancing (to the extent possible) – should be adhered to in all workplace settings, including employee-only conference rooms, break rooms and cafeterias. Masks should be worn at all times, except when eating and/or drinking.

**9. Can we have in person meetings?**

To the extent possible, all meetings should be conducted virtually leveraging technology such as Microsoft Teams. For essential meetings that must take place in person, our existing PPE and mask-wearing protocols should be adhered to. In addition, meeting attendee lists should be kept as small as possible, and social distancing practices must be strictly employed.