

FAQ – Masking at Holland Bloorview

Questions about masking for yourself or your child? Refer to the frequently asked questions below for more information

Q: What if I can't or don't want to wear a mask?

A: Clients and families, staff, students, volunteers, vendors and visitors are required to wear masks while moving throughout the hospital, including while in elevators (max 8 persons) and washrooms. In addition, the following restrictions remain in place:

Clients and families must wear a mask during all appointments, in waiting areas, in spaces where they are receiving care or participating in research, in meetings with staff or during events as attendees in any space.

Vendors and visitors must wear a mask when providing services of any kind in hallways, elevators or washrooms.

Staff, students and volunteers must wear a mask during all appointments, in waiting areas, in spaces where they are providing care or facilitating research with inpatients, while holding meetings with clients and families present or during events in any space where clients and families are present.

Staff who work in clinical area pods (e.g. 2nd floor clinician workspaces) must wear a mask if appropriate distance (2 meters) cannot be maintained.

This policy is in place to protect yourself and those around you who may be at a higher risk for severe illness due to COVID-19.

If clients of any age are not able to wear a mask safely, they will not have to. If you are a family caregiver who has a medical condition that prevents you from wearing a mask, contact your Holland Bloorview health-care team before your appointment and request an exception. Your care team will help you secure a face shield at this time.

Q: What if I still want to wear a mask in spaces where masking is optional?

A: We continue to be a mask-friendly organization and masks can be worn in areas where it is optional. Please continue to respect the choices of others and be respectful of each other's personal space.

Q: How does wearing a mask help?

A: Masks can decrease the spread of COVID-19 in two ways:

- Wearing a mask helps protect others around you by limiting the spread of your droplets when coughing, sneezing, and speaking.
- Wearing a mask protects you by reducing the chance of inhaling droplets from others around you.

Q: Can I wear my own mask or face covering? What about my child?

A: To ensure the safety of everyone at Holland Bloorview, we are providing masks at our entrances. Not all masks are the same – by providing our own masks we can be certain that the one you are wearing will offer the right amount of protection for you and our staff. If you choose to wear your own mask, you will also have to wear a hospital-provided mask on top.

Q: Where will I get a mask when I arrive at Holland Bloorview?

A: Masks will be available at one of two masking booths located in the main reception area. Masks are also provided outside the elevators on every floor and in areas where frequent client-care occurs.

Q: How do I safely put a mask on and take a mask off?

A: Our staff can teach you about wearing and removing masks. Have a look [at this handy poster](#) for a step-by-step guide to wearing and removing a mask properly and safely.

Q: How can I be sure a mask fits properly?

A: Follow this checklist to ensure a mask fits properly:

- Fully covers your mouth and nose once the elastics are secure around ears
- Has minimal gaps between your face and the mask – the mask should fit tightly but not feel uncomfortable
- Does not need to be repositioned or adjusted while being worn
- Is easy to remove safely

A mask that does not fit well can compromise the safety of the person wearing the mask and those around them.

Q: What should I do if my mask gets wet or dirty?

A: If your mask gets wet or dirty during your appointment, let your health-care team know that you need a new mask.

Q: Can I remove my mask to eat or drink?

A: Yes. However, we encourage eating and/or drinking take place in designated areas (e.g. cafeteria). We ask you maintain a reasonable distance when eating or drinking near other clients and families in any space.

Q: What should be done with the mask if I need to take it off?

A: Remove it safely and place it on a clean piece of paper towel or inside a plastic container. If you are changing to a fresh mask or leaving the hospital, be sure to dispose of your mask in a waste container.

Q: Can I take my mask off once my appointment is over?

A: Please leave your mask on during the duration of your appointment and while moving through the hospital. If you need to take it off to eat or drink, or as part of your medical appointment, first wash your hands and then remove your mask carefully, without touching your face.

Q: My child is staying at the hospital. Do I have to wear a mask in their inpatient room?

A: Masks can be removed but must be put back on whenever you cannot maintain two meters of physical distance from other families or when a member of the health care team enters.

Q: Do I need to wear my mask while participating in outdoor activities at the hospital, including day programs?

A: No, masking outdoors is optional. Please continue to respect the choices of others and be respectful of each other's personal space.

Q: Are masks mandatory for staff working in the therapeutic pool?

A: Masking is **optional** while in the pool waiting area and for staff working in the pool with inpatients, community groups and other Holland Bloorview staff. When we consider the reduced effectiveness of the masks when wet, and the nature of the work (in the water), this is an exception to our usual practice of masking in clinical interactions. **Staff must continue to wear their masks on the pool deck when interacting with inpatients.** We will continue to monitor this risk and reassess as needed.

