

REUSE OR EXTENDED USE OF FACEMASKS

COVID-19

REUSE:

removal and storage of facemask between patients

VS

EXTENDED USE:

use of the same facemask for repeated close contact with multiple patients without removal between patients (acceptable when patients have the same respiratory pathogen)

Considerations for **extended use of facemasks** to reduce contact transmission:

- If soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through, mask should be discarded
- Do not touch the mask -- if the mask is touched, proper hand hygiene should immediately follow
- If mask needs to be removed, leave the patient care area



Considerations for **limited reuse of facemasks** to reduce contact transmission:

- Remove mask after each encounter with a patient
- **If soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through**, mask should be discarded
- If mask needs to be removed, leave the patient care area
- **Not all masks can be reused:**
 - Masks with ties may tear when removed and should be considered only for extended use
 - Masks with elastic ear hooks may be better for reuse

Storage & Donning of Used Facemasks

- Facemasks should be stored folded with the outer surface held inward against itself to reduce contact with other surfaces during storage
- Folded mask should be stored in a clean **sealable paper bag or breathable container**
- Each mask should have **ONLY ONE WEARER**
- **Clean hands with soap and water OR alcohol-based sanitizer before and after touching/adjusting the mask for wear**
- **Do not touch the outside of the facemask** -- if contact occurs, wash hands as described above
- Wear a pair of non-sterile gloves when re-donning the mask, discard gloves when finished



Genesee County
Health Department
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