

MEMORANDUM

Updates to Ministry of Health Directives & Respirator Fit-Testing

December 21th, 2021

Good Afternoon,

As you can expect information, recommendations and response to the Omicron VOC is changing as more evidence becomes available. If you are not already aware the Ministry of Health (MOH) has made changes to Directives in response to Omicron. Please ensure you check the Ministry of Health, Guidance for the Health Sector webpage, [linked here](#), to review these Directives in detail.

While important changes for required precautions and procedures from Directive #5 (outlined below) are relevant for **ALL** care settings, they are mandatory for all public hospitals and LTCH settings. In accordance with O. Reg 68/20 made under the Retirement Homes Act, RH must also take all reasonable steps to follow the required precautions and procedures outlined in Directive #5. Ensure your staff are informed and understand this new Directive.



1st Choice Model: N95 1870+

A fit-tested, seal-checked respirator (N95 or approved equivalent) is required in addition to gown, gloves, face shields or goggles at **ALL** times, when providing direct care to or interacting with a suspected, probable, or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Ensure your staff have access to PPE, including appropriately fitted N95 respirators, ideally at the point of use. (e.g., PPE cart, bins, boards and/or the use of designated cupboards, closets, etc.). Staff must receive ongoing education, and regular audits should be conducted, to ensure PPE is being used properly.

In efforts to preserve supplies, consider extending the use of respirators (N95 masks) and eye protection (goggles, face shield). Extended use is encouraged over reuse of these items. Consider disinfection of eye protection between residents/clients with a short contact time disinfectant (e.g., 1 minute kill time). Review/post Public Health Ontario's cleaning & disinfecting reusable eye protection document, [available here](#).

N95 1870+ Fit Testing

A list of fit test service providers is [available here](#). Fit testing support is also available through the [Critical PPE Escalation Portal](#).

Extended Use: Refers to the practice of wearing the same item of personal protective equipment for repeated encounters with several patients, without removing it between the encounters. Extended use may be implemented when multiple patients with the same infection are placed together in dedicated waiting rooms, clinics or hospital units³ during supply shortages and in consultation with the IPAC team.

Re-use: Reuse should only be considered under extreme shortages. Reuse involves the practice of using the same item of personal protective equipment for multiple encounters with patients but removing it ('doffing') between at least some of the encounters. The item of personal protective equipment is stored in between encounters and re-used.

The Ontario Workplace PPE supplier directory is available [here](#). Critical PPE, swab kit and rapid test intake requests can be accessed through the [Critical PPE Escalation Portal](#).

As always, if you want to talk IPAC, have questions, concerns or need assistance reach out to your local coordinator or a member of our team via email: SEhubintake@kingstonhsc.ca or visit our website [linked here](#).

Sincerely,

Your SE IPAC Hub team
Kingston Health Sciences Centre