

COVID-19 UPDATE

Keeping You Safe



Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences
Centre

To: All Staff, Professional Staff, Learners and Volunteers

From: Jennifer Wintermans, EVP, Communications and Corporate Relations, COVID-19 Lead

Date: December 17, 2021

RE: **PPE Requirements – Use of N95 Masks**

To help ensure the safety and protection of our work environment and given the high level of uncertainty regarding transmissibility of the Omicron variant, all health care workers (including staff, professional staff, learners and volunteers) providing direct care or entering a room with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patient are required to wear a fit-tested, seal-checked N95 respirator mask. This decision is based on new interim guidelines from Public Health Ontario which recommend additional protection on personal protective equipment (PPE) for health care workers that outline when medical/surgical masks are appropriate and when N95 respirators are preferred.

The requirements are temporary at this time and we will continue to assess and provide evidence-based decision making to any updates or changes in protocols as more information is learned about this new variant or the situation should change. Any new details on changes will be communicated to you.

Our Hospital's Internal Pandemic Response remains at Level Orange (Restrict). It is important to know that throughout any response level we will continue to re-evaluate our activities and actions to ensure appropriate guidelines are in place that reflect our current needs and maintain the safety of all. The current guidance document for reference about N95s can be found here: <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Guidance-Document-PPE-Requirements-for-COVID-19-Positive-or-Presumptive-Patients-N95-Use-December-17-2021.pdf>

For further information on the guidance document please contact Infection Prevention and Control at 684-6040 or infectioncontrol@tbh.net. For further information about N95s please contact ohs@tbh.net.

Thank you for your continued efforts.

All Hospital COVID-19 updates and resources are available on the iNtranet at <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information/>.