

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Placement Guidelines for Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Patients

The safety of all members of our healthcare team is a top priority for University Health System as we navigate the rapidly evolving clinical situation around COVID-19.

As clinical data are reviewed and experience from the nation and the world is shared regarding the management of patients, we recognize that the use of airborne precautions in all clinical situations is not necessary. Based on available evidence and expert opinion, the COVID-19 virus, similar to other coronaviruses and influenza, is primarily transmitted through close contact and large droplets.

As a result, University Health System is now recommending standard/droplet/contact precautions for all acute care, Emergency Department, and ambulatory patients with suspected (Persons Under Investigation) or confirmed COVID-19 infection across the Health System.

Standard/droplet/contact precautions include the following PPE:

- Procedural or surgical mask
- Gown
- Gloves
- Eye protection (goggles or face shield)

This standard is consistent with the World Health Organization's defined rational use of personal protective equipment for coronavirus disease 2019 interim guidance. These recommendations are also in alignment with updated guidelines issued by the CDC for *Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings* issued on March 10, 2020. Locally, these same standards were referenced by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District in guidance sent out on March 19, 2020.

The CDC currently recommends standard/contact/airborne precautions for patients at highest risk and we continue to support this approach for patients with suspected (Persons Under Investigation) or confirmed COVID-19 infection that require aerosol generating procedures.

Aerosol Generating Procedures include the following:

- Bronchoscopy
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation

- Endotracheal intubation
- Nebulizer therapy
- Non-invasive positive pressure ventilation (e.g. BiPAP machine)
- Suctioning
- Sputum induction
- Tracheostomy
- Ventilated patient with dislodged tubing

Therefore, suspected (Persons Under Investigation) or confirmed COVID-19 patients that require aerosol generating procedures will be performed using airborne/droplet/contact precautions.

Standard/contact/airborne precautions include the following PPE:

- N95 respirator
- Gown
- Gloves
- Eye protection (goggles or face shield)

Collection of samples using nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal swabs is not considered an aerosol generating procedure. This can be done safely for Persons Under Investigation (PUI) using the standard/droplet/contact precautions listed above.

Inpatient Placement for Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Patients

Suspected (Persons Under Investigation) or confirmed COVID-19 patients that require admission to the hospital should be placed in a regular single-person room with the door closed. The patient should have a dedicated bathroom.

Airborne Infection Isolation Rooms (AIIR) should be reserved for patients who will be undergoing aerosol-generating procedures. Because of the potential for dislodged ventilator tubing breaking the closed circuit, ventilated patients will also be placed in Airborne Infection Isolation Rooms (AIIR) rooms. Care should be taken to avoid aerosol-generating procedures when possible, such as using metered-dose inhalers instead of nebulizer therapy and to avoid sputum induction.

Suspected (Persons Under Investigation) or confirmed COVID-19 patients required to undergo aerosol-generating procedures should be in an AIIR and N95 respirators should be worn while in the patient's room along with other appropriate PPE, including gowns, gloves, and eye protection (goggles or face shield).

If suspected (Persons Under Investigation) or confirmed COVID-19 patients do not require an AIIR, then a barrier mask (surgical or procedural mask) can be used in place of an N95 respirator while in the patient's room