Guide to Mask Use in Health Care Settings

22 September 2020

General guidance:
A risk assessment should be undertaken to determine whether a mask and what type is required.

Masks used for Infection Prevention and Control requirements

Particulate respirators are also known as 'air-purifying respirators' because they protect by filtering particles out of the air as you breathe.[1]

Medical masks are defined as surgical or procedure masks that are flat or pleated. They are affixed to the head with straps that go around the ears, or head, or both. Their performance characteristics are tested according to a set of standardised test methods[2]. New Zealand has adopted the British and European Standard listed below.

TYPE USED		BY WHO	PURPOSE	EXAMPLES
Particulate Respirators **N95 or P2** AS/NZS 1716 or equivalent		Healthcare worker	Protects the wearer	When providing care for patients infected with diseases transmitted by the airborne route, such as pulmonary tuberculosis or measles – **Airborne Precautions.**
				Performing an aerosol generating procedure on a suspect or known COVID-19 patient - **Airborne Precautions.**
Medical Mask **Type IIR** *(EN) 14683 **Level 3***ASTM F2100 * moderate to high fluid resistant		Healthcare worker	Protects the wearer	Surgical procedures or major trauma and procedures where there is high risk of exposure to blood and body fluid splash - **Standard Precautions.**
				Providing direct clinical care to a suspected or known COVID patient/client where **Droplet Precautions** are required.
			Protects the patient	During a surgical or medical procedure, the mask prevents the passage of microbes from the nose and mouth of the healthcare worker into the surgical wound and sterile field.
Medical Mask **Level 2*** ASTM F2100 *moderate fluid resistance **Type II** (EN) 14683		Healthcare worker	Protects the wearer	Providing direct clinical care to a patient/client where **Droplet Precautions** are required †.
				Procedures where there is a low risk of blood and body fluid splash - **Standard Precautions †.**
			Protects the patient	During a medical procedure the mask prevents the passage of microbes from the nose and mouth of the healthcare worker into the surgical wound and sterile field.
		Patient	Protects others	To be worn by patients with respiratory symptoms - protects others and the environment by reducing dispersal of exhaled infectious respiratory particles - **Source Control**
Medical Mask **Type I** (EN) 14683 **Level 1** ASTM F2100		At risk population	Protects the wearer	Protection for the wearer from infectious respiratory particles dispersed in their immediate environment.
		Patient	Protects others	To be worn by patients with respiratory symptoms - protects others and the environment by reducing dispersal of exhaled infectious respiratory particles - **Source Control**
		Healthcare worker or Patient	Protects others	May be used for **Source Control** when a mask is not required for use as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

[1] Particulate respirators are required to meet Australian and New Zealand Standards; AS/NZS 1716:2012 or equivalent

[2] Medical masks are required to meet the standards (British Standard (BS) EN (European Standard) 14683:2019, (Type I, II and IIR) or the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F2100 (Level 1, 2 or 3)

† use a Level 2 mask   *Photos are indicative only for demonstration purposes. Supply and brands may vary.*