

POLICY AND PROCEDURE	
Subject: Mask Exemption Policy	Category: Health & Safety
Date Approved: August 2020	Date Revised: July 27, 2022
Author: Clinic Manager	Reviewing Body: MHC Physicians
Specific to: All Staff	Next Review Date: July 27, 2024

DATE(S) REVISED/REVIEWED SUMMARY

Version	Date	Comments/Changes
1.0	August 2020	Initial Policy
2.0	July 27, 2022	Reviewed & Revised

INTRODUCTION

The Mapleton Health Centre believes in providing superior healthcare services to our patients, clients, and partners in the community. In light of Ontario’s Universal Masking protocols during COVID-19 and due to inquiries from the community regarding masking we are providing the following policy to be strictly enforced.

POLICY

At this present time the current accepted medical evidence via the CDC, WHO and Ontario PHL masking during COVID-19 far outweighs any theoretical risks. The clinic fully and completely advocates for universal masking for all clinic interactions daily and respecting a 2 m physical distancing at all times, in conjunction with following all other COVID-19 policies and protocols. These protocols can be found in the Mapleton Health Centre COVID-19 Company Policy and Safety Plan.

Inappropriate medical exemptions have the potential to inadvertently hasten the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

There are “exceptional circumstances” which warrant consideration of a mask exemption:

- Individuals, particularly children, having documented sensory processing disorders.
- Patients with facial deformities that make masking incompatible.
- Children under the age of 2 years.
- Children under the age of 5 who due to cognitive/developmental issues “refuse” to wear a face covering.
- Individuals with documented PTSD.
- Diagnosed prior to COVID-19 patients with extreme agoraphobia/asphyxia phobia.
- Individuals with diagnosed cognitive impairments, intellectual deficiency, autism or autism spectrum.

- Individuals with an accommodation under the Ontario Human Rights Code or the Accessibility for Ontarians with a Disabilities Act (that would pertain to and include wearing a face covering (i.e. Immobilization in a wheelchair would not qualify).

If an individual, patient, or client of our clinic feels that based on these criteria an exemption is warranted, or if you wish to discuss your concerns with your primary care physician at the clinic, please call for an appointment.

We strongly advise individuals who are exempt from wearing a mask during COVID-19 to avoid all indoor public spaces.

Please Note:

- Asthma is NOT a contraindication or an accepted medical reason NOT to wear a mask/facial covering.
- COPD, including chronic bronchitis and emphysema is NOT a contraindication or an accepted medical reason NOT to wear a mask/face shield.
*Discomfort caused by a mask is not a valid or accepted medical reason for NOT wearing a mask/facial covering.
- Acne caused by a mask is NOT a valid or accepted medical reason for NOT wearing a mask/facial covering.
- Wearing a mask or facial covering does NOT reduce or lower oxygen levels for individuals.

Masks with exhalation valves should not be used and are unacceptable for use in this clinic. You will be asked to change your mask to an acceptable one before service is provided. They allow infectious respiratory droplets to spread OUTSIDE the mask and thus do NOT protect others from the spread of infection. Masks MUST be worn properly at all times, no exceptions. You will be asked to leave the clinic if strict adherence to this policy is not forthcoming.

Patients with respiratory illnesses including asthma and COPD

The Canadian Thoracic Society, the professional society that provides support and guidelines for physicians and patients states:

“There is no quantified medical evidence that wearing a face mask will exacerbate an underlying lung condition.”

Individuals with chronic pulmonary illnesses such as asthma and COPD are at a higher risk for severe complications if contracting COVID-19. Having a chronic breathing issue is the MOST compelling reason for wearing a mask in such cases, rather than seeking an exemption. Therefore, this clinic physician group will refrain from providing exemptions to such patients without a thorough and complete examination of circumstances particular to a very specific set of patient circumstances.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on a biannual (every 2 years) basis to ensure its policy statements and reporting procedures remain clear, relevant, and practical for the organization. The policy will be amended as considered necessary.

1. Canadian Thoracic Society recommendations for the use of face masks by the public during SARS-CoV-2 (covid19) June 2, 2020.
2. Lung Association: Non-medical Face Masks and COVID-19 – www.lung.ca/covid19
3. Joint Statement on Importance of Patients with Chronic Lung Disease Wearing Facial Coverings During COVID-19 Pandemic (a joint statement by the American College of Chest Physicians, the American Lung Association, the American Thoracic Society and the COPD Foundation – July 17, 2020).



11 Andrews Dr. W
Drayton, ON N0G 1P0
P: (519)638-3088
F: (519)638-3982
E: admin@mapletonhc.ca

Mask Exemption Policy

Employee/Patient/Visitor Acknowledgment

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read and understand the Mask Exemption Policy of the Mapleton Health Centre. I agree to adhere to this policy.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____