

Factsheet and guidance on the use of filtering face piece mask (FFP3 Mask)

1. What is filtering face piece mask (FFP3 Mask)?

A filtering face piece is a type of respiratory protection that is worn over the nose and mouth designed to protect the wearer from inhaling hazardous substances, including airborne particles (aerosols). There are 2 types of respiratory protection that can be used, tight-fitting disposable FFP respirators and loose-fitting powered respirator hoods. There are 3 categories of FFP respirator: FFP1, FFP2 and FFP3. FFP3 mask and loose-fitting powered respirator hoods provide the highest level of protection and are recommended when caring for patients in areas where high risk.

2. What do I need to consider before I wear FFP3 Mask?

Before wearing an FFP3 mask there are a few things to consider. Under Health and Safety law it is a legal requirement all staff using this type of equipment are face fit tested.

3. What is face fit testing?

A face fit test should be carried out before wearing FFP 3 mask for the first time. Inadequate fit can reduce the protection provided and lead to immediate or long-term ill health or can even put the wearer's life in danger.

A fit test should be repeated whenever there is a change to the FFP3 mask type, size, model or material, or whenever there is a change to the circumstances of the wearer that could alter the fit of the FFP3 mask, for example:

- weight loss or gain
- substantial dental work
- any facial changes (scars, moles, effects of ageing etc.) around the face seal area facial piercings
- introduction or change in other head-worn personal protective equipment (PPE)

There is no stipulated frequency for retesting, and you do not need to re-test if there are no changes in these circumstances.

4. How do I wear FFP3 mask?

Training can be provided by the Trust fit testing team. Please contact them on elft.fittesting@nhs.net

5. Can visitors and patients wear FFP3 mask?

FFP3 mask are recommended only for use by healthcare personnel who need protection from both airborne and fluid hazards (e.g., splashes sprays). These respirators are not used or needed outside of healthcare settings. Patients should not be routinely given FFP3 mask

however, in cases of suspected TB infection (based on risk assessment) this may be used. However please seek advice from infection control department in the first instance on elft.infectioncontrol@nhs.net

6. When should I wear an FFP3 Mask?

Please refer to flow chart on page 4 for when to wear FFP3 mask.

7. Should I wear and FFP3 mask with Valve or Non-valve?

The Infection Prevention and Control department recommends wearing FFP3 mask without a valve. An FFP3 mask with a valve is not fluid resistant and doesn't provide the wearer adequate protection to airborne particles.

8. Can I re-use the FFP3 mask after I have worn it?

Ideally FFP3 mask should be discarded after each patient encounter and after aerosol generating procedures. It should also be discarded when;

- it becomes damaged or deformed;
- no longer forms an effective seal to the face; becomes wet or visibly dirty;
- breathing becomes difficult;
- or if it becomes contaminated with blood,
- Respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids from patients.

9. What is an Aerosol generating procedure (AGPs)?

AGPs are procedures that create a higher risk of respiratory infection transmission and are defined as any procedure that can result in the release of airborne particles <5µm in size from the respiratory tract of an individual. These can remain suspended in the air, may travel over a distance and may cause infection if they are inhaled when treating someone who is suffering from an infectious disease, transmitted wholly or partly by the airborne or droplet route.

FFP3 respirator masks will be required when undertaking an AGP on a patient COVID-19 pathway or when an unacceptable risk of transmission remains following rigorous application of the hierarchy of control.

The list of medical procedures that are considered to be aerosol generating and associated with an increased risk of respiratory transmission is:

- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (*Local policy for ELFT);
- awake bronchoscopy (including awake tracheal intubation)
- awake ear, nose, and throat (ENT) airway procedures that involve respiratory suctioning
- awake upper gastro-intestinal endoscopy
- dental procedures (using high speed or high frequency devices, for example ultrasonic scalers/high speed drills)
- induction of sputum
- respiratory tract suctioning
- surgery or post-mortem procedures (like high speed cutting / drilling) likely to produce aerosol from the respiratory tract (upper or lower) or sinuses.

- tracheostomy procedures (insertion or removal). *Awake including 'conscious' sedation (excluding anaesthetised patients with secured airway).

10. Additional Infection control measures:

When using FFP3 mask the following infection prevention and control measures should also be utilised:

- Wearing PPE including gowns/aprons/ gloves, face visor/eye protection- *please conduct risk assessment of clinical activity and PPE required.*
- Hand hygiene using soap & water or alcohol
- Twice weekly lateral flow test
- COVID-19 staff risk assessment
- COVID-19 vaccination
- COVID-19 work place risk assessment
- Opening of windows for ventilation. Mechanical ventilation which does not recirculate the air.

11. References

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/C1636-national-ipc-manual-for-england-v2.pdf>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg479.pdf>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/ppe-face-masks/face-mask-ppe-rpe.htm>

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Risk assessment guide for wearing FFP3 Mask

Are you:

- Working on ward with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or respiratory illness (Influenza, TB)?
 - Are you looking after COVID-19 positive case in the community?
 - Undertaking aerosol generating procedure- (see AGP list on page 2)?
 - Undertaking physical resistant?
 - Working in poor ventilated environments?

No

Yes

Have you been fit tested?

No

Yes

Consider wearing Fluid resistant surgical mask including the following IPC measures:

- Wearing PPE including gloves apron, face visor/eye protection- please conduct risk assessment of clinical activity
- Hand hygiene using soap & water or alcohol gel
- Twice weekly lateral flow test COVID-19 staff risk assessment tool
- COVID-19 vaccination
- COVID-19 work place risk assessment
- Opening of windows for ventilation

Consider wearing FFP3 Mask including the following IPC measures:

- Wearing PPE including gowns Gloves, face visor/eye protection-please conduct risk assessment of clinical activity
- Hand hygiene using soap & water or alcohol gel
- Twice weekly lateral flow test
- COVID-19 staff risk assessment tool
- 2 meters social distancing COVID-19 vaccination
- COVID-19 work place risk assessment
- Opening of windows for ventilation