

Guidance and Use Case Scenarios for Face Coverings and PPE

Face Covering Guidance	
All faculty, staff, students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings, including cloth face coverings, disposable face masks, N95s, and/or surgical masks, are no longer required to be worn while inside University of Pittsburgh buildings, except while in healthcare settings, in spaces where clinical research is actively conducted, and on Pitt shuttle buses. • In settings where face coverings are optional, everyone has the right to choose to wear a mask. University members are encouraged to make the best decision for their health, wellbeing, and family. All University members are expected to respect those decisions. • Studies have shown that face coverings are effective at reducing risk for the person wearing the face covering to contract COVID-19 or any respiratory virus. Wearing a well-fitted mask will help protect you from contracting the SARS-CoV-2 virus, even if others around you are not wearing masks, particularly in communities where vaccination rates are high. • Face coverings are not personal protective equipment (PPE), like the surgical masks and N95 respirators that are worn by persons for barrier or respiratory protection from known hazards in the workplace. • Masks with one-way valves (i.e., plastic disk on mask) do not protect others. One-way valves allow your breath to be shared with the public, as if you are not wearing a face covering.
Personnel in laboratories or other areas with established PPE requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain all previously established lab-specific or area-specific requirements for PPE, such as lab coats, gloves, eye protection. • Face coverings are not a substitute for any established PPE, including properly fit-tested N95 respirators.

Face Covering and PPE Guidance for Special Use Cases	
Research performed in clinical spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel should follow requirements for clinical personnel as established by the entity responsible for the space (for example, in a UPMC-managed healthcare setting follow requirements for UPMC clinical personnel).
Aerosol generating research procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For any research performed in a setting that is directly under control of a hospital or other state-approved healthcare facility, implement standards for healthcare workers performing aerosol generating procedures. Document or update all existing procedures to include current PPE and other requirements. For aerosol-generating research performed in any setting not under control of a hospital or other state-approved healthcare facility (e.g., an exercise study where a face covering is contra-indicated), a well-fitted face covering, such as a surgical mask or N95, should be worn by all persons in the area. Researchers are strongly encouraged to be up to date on COVID-19 vaccination requirements.
Animal surgeries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement established PPE of surgical mask, sterile gown, and sterile gloves. Add eye protection or face shield when procedure involves potential for splash or spray.
Interacting with Research participants (on-campus or off-campus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face coverings are expected to be worn by all individuals in areas conducting research with human research participants that considered themselves healthcare providers for vaccination prioritization. All Pitt researchers are encouraged to ask human research subjects their preference regarding face coverings, such as “Would you prefer that I wear a mask during this interaction?” If an in-person visit is conducted, the participant should complete COVID-19 screening questions; and reschedule the study visit whenever affirmative responses are received for COVID-19 symptoms, isolation, post-exposure quarantine, or travel of concern. If participants cannot wear face coverings during study participation (e.g., face tracking, strenuous exercise, or sputum induction), researchers are strongly encouraged to remain current on COVID-19 vaccination recommendations and should use enhanced face coverings available through the Department of Environmental Health and Safety (e.g., medical grade surgical mask or N95 mask).

Face Covering and PPE Guidance for Special Use Cases	
Arts with singing, or brass and woodwind instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehearsing outdoors remains the lowest risk option. Well-fitted face coverings can reduce the amount of potentially infected aerosol from circulating indoors, and use can be considered for singing. Bell covers, particularly for brass instruments, can reduce circulation of potentially infected aerosols in indoor spaces.
Theater arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-fitted face coverings can reduce the amount of potentially infected aerosol from circulating indoors, and use should be considered when projecting voice/speaking loudly indoors.