UW Medicine Universal Eye Protection for Patient Interactions

Date: 07/20/2020

Owner: UW Medicine Infection Prevention & Control and Employee Health

Statement of Purpose: To reduce the risk of exposure and transmission of COVID-19 during patient interactions. This policy applies to all staff, students, trainees, and faculty interacting with patients.

Policy:

- Eye protection is defined for the purposes of this policy as goggles (flexible or rigid) or a face shield.
- Healthcare personnel (HCP) will be provided with either goggles (flexible or rigid) or a face shield at the start of the shift.
  - Unit leadership will determine the process for issuing, managing and storing eye protection based on assessment of unit needs and, where possible, individual preference.
- HCP will wear eye protection when interacting with patients always.
- Upon removal of eye protection, HCP will disinfect the goggle/face shield prior to storage or reuse. Follow eye protection reuse procedure.
- If exiting a Droplet/Contact or Airborne/Contact Precaution room, eye protection must be disinfected (with any approved disinfectant wipe)
- Following disinfection, eye protection may be labeled and stored per unit guidelines, or can be stored in a pocket, or reused immediately.
- Hand hygiene is required prior to donning and after doffing eye protection.

FAQs:

- If I am behind a plexiglass barrier, do I need eye protection as well?
  - Yes, if there is any chance that a patient or visitor could interact with you from above or around the sides of the plexiglass barrier. If you are fully protected on all sides by environmental barriers, eye protection is not needed.
- If I have a back-office desk within a clinic but I do not interact with patients, do I need to wear eye protection?
  - No, if you are not interacting with patients you only need to wear a mask.
- Do I need to disinfect the eye protection after leaving each room if I intend to wear the same eye protection all the time?
  - Eye protection must be disinfected between patients only if you are exiting a Droplet/Contact or Airborne/Contact room or if there is concern for a viral respiratory tract infection.
- Should I use Sani Wipes to clean face shields/goggles in a Contact/Enteric precaution room (ex. patient with C. diff)?
  - Staff should use bleach, allow to dry, then wipe off residue with damp wash cloth or Sani wipe.
- Should staff obtain new protection (i.e. goggles, face shield) each day, or reuse more than one day?
  - Face shield use is determined by the PPE Mitigation Policy. Areas such as clinics may choose to use face shields for multiple days. Disposable eye protection can be re-used
but should be disposed if interfering with vision (ex. Clouding or scratches). Upon staff discretion.
  - Hard-sided goggles should be reused indefinitely until they are defective. Upon staff discretion.

- Would staff be able to bring their own goggles from home to wear?
  - This will be assessed on a case by case basis by the unit manager in coordination with Employee Health. Some staff have prescription goggles which are allowed and consistent with this policy.

- Would staff be able to bring in their own face shields from home to wear?
  - No. You must use eye protection supplied by UW Medicine for the purposes of patient care.

- What if I refuse to wear eye protection?
  - This policy applies to all UW Medicine personnel. The requirement to wear eye protection is part of infection prevention & control transmission-based precaution. This is similar to the requirement to use enteric precautions when working with patients with C. difficile infection and is not optional.

- What do I need to wear when I enter, exit or transit through clinical areas?
  - Entering, exiting and transiting through clinical areas without eye protection is acceptable. Eye protection should be donned prior to starting activities that involve patients and visitors.
  - When walking through UW Medicine facilities without eye protection, it is acceptable to interact with patients and visitors (for example, to provide directions or to answer questions).


https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/eye/eye-infectious.html