



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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Deputy Johnny Mythen TD

Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Date: 10 February 2020

PQ ref 5599/21 - To ask the Minister for Health the position in relation to a national requirement that high-standard FFP2 masks be used in all healthcare settings, not just basic surgical masks; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Mythen

Both the Health Protection Surveillance Centre & Antimicrobial Resistance and Infection Control guidance includes a recommendation that healthcare workers in community and hospital settings should have access to a well-fitted respirator mask (FFP2) and eye protection when in contact with possible or confirmed COVID-19 cases and COVID-19 contacts. In the context of a ward or facility based outbreak or a COVID-19 assessment hub it is appropriate to consider all patients in the setting as suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases.

A surgical mask and visor also offer a high degree of protection. These may be more comfortable for and preferred by some staff. A surgical mask is appropriate for non-patient facing activity and when caring for patients where there is no suspicion of COVID-19 and there is no evidence of transmission in the service. A comprehensive approach to IPC is outlined in HPSC/AMRIC guidance documents which will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis in light of emerging evidence and experience nationally and internationally.

I trust this answers your question to your satisfaction.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Hayden
General Manager
Office of the CCO