

Masking requirement lifted at Oak Valley Health

For immediate release

Markham, ON (May 6, 2024) - Oak Valley Health, like many hospitals in the province is updating its masking requirements.

Following consultation with key internal stakeholders including Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC), Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), and Public Health guidance, Oak Valley Health is announcing changes to its masking requirements, starting on Monday, May 6, 2024.

Effective, May 6, 2024 masks will no longer be required in clinical/patient-care areas at Oak Valley Health. This includes Markham Stouffville Hospital, Uxbridge Hospital, and the Reactivation Care Centre.

Oak Valley Health remains a mask-friendly environment. “While Oak Valley Health may be lifting masking requirements, some of our colleagues and community members may choose to remain masked,” says Michelle Samm, Director of Infection Prevention and Control. “It is our duty to support those individual decisions and ensure we are kind, considerate, and respectful to one other.”

Consistent with recommended infection prevention and control practices prior to the pandemic, masking and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) will continue to be required, in specific cases to prevent the spread of illness, such as during an outbreak in a specific area of the hospital, or when a patient’s care team deems it necessary (e.g., droplet/contact precautions) to prevent the patient from either acquiring or spreading a virus to others at risk of illness.

Mask dispensers will remain at the entrances of each hospital site for those who need one. Patients experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms are asked to put on a mask upon entry to the hospital – to prevent the spread of transmission.

Visitors are asked not to come to the hospital if they are feeling unwell or are showing symptoms of a respiratory illness. Oak Valley Health also encourages visitors to practice good hand hygiene and to keep their vaccinations up-to-date.

Staff and patient safety and wellness remain a priority for Oak Valley Health. To protect the most vulnerable patients and prevent the spread of transmission, the organization will re-evaluate its masking policy at the start of respiratory virus season next fall – and will likely return to masking in clinical areas during the flu season.

-30-

About Oak Valley Health:

Oak Valley Health is one of Ontario’s leading community health care organizations. Across our two hospitals, Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH) and Uxbridge Hospital (UXB), as well as our Reactivation Care Centre (RCC), we provide high quality, patient-centred care to more than 468,000 patients each year. We offer diagnostic and emergency services and deliver clinical programs in acute care medicine and surgery, addictions and mental health, and childbirth and children’s services. We are proud to be part of the Eastern York Region North Durham Ontario Health Team (EYRND OHT). Our 586 professional staff (including physicians, midwives, and dentists) over 3,000 staff and over 930 volunteers serve patients and families with an honoured to care mindset and are focused on delivering an extraordinary patient experience to the residents of Markham, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Uxbridge, and beyond. oakvalleyhealth.ca

For more information, please contact:

Michelle Lee Hoy, Senior Corporate Communications Specialist
Oak Valley Health
mleehoy@oakvalleyhealth.ca
Office: 905-472-7373 ext. 2419, Cell: 416-270-6009