FAQs about wearing a personal mask

Why is this type of masking important?
As UVMMC employees, we spend so much time caring for patients and families that sometimes we lose sight of the other important resource we need to protect: each other. As time has passed, the spread of the virus is no longer related to exposures like travel, it is now community-wide. We have taken many measures to try to contain the spread here such as restricting visitors and screening staff. Now we are adopting masking as an extra measure to keep you and our patients safe. The mask is the way we care for one another by containing droplets that could spread the virus. It is important that we take every measure to protect our workforce. Wearing personal mask-cloth or other material-helps to contain the spread of virus at work.

What kind of mask should I be wearing?
We are asking all staff to wear a personal mask (cloth or other material) when entering the hospital, while walking through the hospital and in shared spaces as a way of protecting one another during normal work. It should be used when you are in any shared space including hallways and cafeterias or if you work in an area without direct patient care and where social distancing is hard to maintain (shared offices, rooms with multiple employees). Cloth masks are not to be used in direct patient care. The good news is by wearing a personal mask to and from your job, you are modeling best practices to our community in “flattening the curve” of COVID 19.

How do I manage using this mask?
First, hand hygiene remains a critical step in donning, maintaining, and doffing a mask. Washing your hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer remains the most important thing you can do to protect yourself and others. We recommend that staff hang or contain their personal mask when not on their face. You could hang them from one ear or from any other hook that allows the mask to not touch other surfaces. It is important to remember to maintain social distancing even when wearing a personal mask.

What if I don’t want to wear a mask while at work?
We do expect you to wear a mask when in public areas in order to protect everyone else. If you feel you need to work without your mask, please have this conversation with your leader to see what accommodations are possible.