

GUIDANCE FOR WHEN A PERSON REFUSES TO WEAR A MASK UPON ENTERING CLEVELAND CLINIC FACILITIES: RESPOND WITH H.E.A.R.T.:

HEAR:

It sounds like you are worried about the mask. Can you tell me more about that?

I appreciate you don't want to wear masks anymore, especially now that you are vaccinated. Thank you for sharing that. [spoken with warmth and genuine appreciation].

EMPATHIZE:

I know wearing a mask can feel uncomfortable. It can also make it difficult to hear what people are saying. This has to be so stressful for you.

APOLOGIZE:

Masks are <uncomfortable/frustrating/etc.> and I am sorry.

I wish there was an easier way to keep everyone safe.

RESPOND:

Encouraging everyone to wear a mask over their nose, mouth and chin helps us reduce the spread of infection.

For your safety and the safety of all, masks should be worn by anyone entering our shared spaces. We ask that you wear a mask to enter.

Both Ohio guidance and CDC guidance still require masks in healthcare settings, even for vaccinated people. With vulnerable people in our hospitals, this is the best way to make sure everyone is safe.

THANK:

I want to thank you for keeping us all safe. Your cooperation means a lot to us.

I appreciate your help with this. Thank you for trusting us with your care.

If a person still refuses to wear a mask for non-medical reasons:

VISITORS: *If you will not wear a mask, then we will connect you virtually by phone. You cannot enter the premises further, but we will take good care of your loved one.*

OUTPATIENTS: *I certainly respect your rights to not wear a mask, and I know you will respect our obligation to follow CDC guidance for healthcare settings to keep everyone safe by requiring masks. You will need to schedule a virtual appointment.*

If a patient insists an urgent outpatient appointment and refuses to wear a mask or schedule a virtual appointment:

I am sorry you don't feel well today. Because our options do not work for you, may I suggest you go to the nearest Emergency Department?

If you would like to file a complaint about our policy, you can contact the Ombudsman Office at 216.444.2544 or ombudsman@ccf.org.

Exceptions to masks as possible for:

- Patient states medical condition prevents mask wearing.
- Possibilities:
 - Children under age 2.
 - Anyone who is incapacitated, or for whom the mask is a swallow risk.
 - Anyone who is unable to tolerate a mask, or who cannot remove a mask without help.
- Anyone trying to enter the Emergency Department or an Urgent Care in which an Emergency Department is onsite and would need a medical screening exam (EMTALA) and stabilizing care.