

## **Healthcare organizations update masking guidelines for 2025-26 respiratory illness season.**

Healthcare systems in Puget Sound updated their guidelines for masking in hospitals and outpatient clinics during respiratory illness season. This year's thresholds will consider the overall burden of respiratory illnesses that include COVID-19, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) as well as other respiratory illness infections.

Local healthcare facilities will develop masking policies for patients, visitors, and employees in healthcare settings based on respiratory illness levels in the community. Masking is an effective way to reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses in healthcare settings.

Skagit County Public Health joins other local health jurisdictions in supporting the continued commitment by healthcare organizations to encourage appropriate masking in hospitals and clinics. Masking reduces the spread of disease, protects vulnerable patients and healthcare workers, and helps ensure healthcare facilities maintain capacity to serve our communities.

*“In addition to vaccination, masking remains the most effective measure for preventing the transmission of respiratory diseases in high-risk settings”* - Howard Leibrand, Health Officer, Skagit County

You can read more about the current masking guidelines and local healthcare organizations' commitment to keeping our community safe in this [statement](#).