Ohio | Department of Health

HEALTH ALERT
Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19):
Guidance for Utilizing and Optimizing Personal Protective Equipment

April 1, 2020
Update from Health Alert released March 25, 2020

Summary and Action Items
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided guidance on "Strategies to Optimize the Supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Equipment", including eye protection, isolation gowns, facemasks, N95 respirators, and ventilators.
- CDC has also provided guidance for "Frequently Asked Questions about Personal Protective Equipment".
- The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is releasing guidance and instruction materials (print and video) related to optimizing PPE for healthcare facilities developed by ODH, CDC, Emory University School of Medicine, and Nebraska Medicine. These resources are also available on the Ohio Public Health Communication System (OPHCS) site under Documents > EPI Issues > 2019 Novel Coronavirus > Strategies for Optimizing PPE.
- ODH is recommending that all staff in long-term care facilities wear a surgical/medical facemask while working to avoid asymptomatic transmission of COVID-19 to residents and other staff. This includes facilities not known to be affected by COVID-19.
- In settings where facemasks are not available, healthcare personnel (HCP) might use homemade masks (e.g., bandana, scarf) for care of patients with COVID-19 as a last resort. However, homemade masks are not considered PPE, since their capability to protect HCP is unknown. Caution should be exercised when considering this option. Homemade masks should ideally be used in combination with a face shield that covers the entire front (that extends to the chin or below) and sides of the face.

Attached resources (also posted in OPHCS) are listed below:
1. Strategies for Optimizing PPE
2. Instructions for Reuse of Facemasks
3. Instructions for N95 Respirator Use
4. Printable Instructions and Videos for Optimizing PPE
5. PPE Contingency Planning

Contact
Immediately report all confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the local health department in the jurisdiction in which the case resides. To locate a local health department, please visit https://odhgateway.odh.ohio.gov/lhdinformationsystem/Directory/GetMyLHD.

For general questions related to COVID-19, healthcare providers and facilities should contact their local health department. Ohio local health departments should contact the ODH Bureau of Infectious Diseases at 614-995-5599.