

Covid-19 Policy – Masking Update



Frequently Asked Questions

Based on the latest advice and data from state and local health departments, masks are required in NKC patient care areas, starting January 12, 2026. See below for answers to frequently asked questions.

Q) Why is Northwest Kidney Centers returning to mandatory masking in patient care areas?

A) We monitor respiratory virus cases (Covid-19, influenza, RSV) that lead to emergency room visits in King County. As of Dec. 27, 2025, the levels of acute respiratory illness circulating in King County are above the alert thresholds set by the Washington Department of Health and Public Health – Seattle & King County. This means respiratory virus cases are increasing, so we're requiring everyone to wear a mask in patient care areas to help curb the spread and keep patients and staff safe.

Q) When will these changes go into effect?

A) The masking requirement will go into effect on Monday, Jan. 12, 2026.

Q) Are other healthcare organizations in the region also requiring masks?

A) Yes, other healthcare organizations are taking these same steps to require masking in patient care areas, based on the increase in respiratory virus transmissions in our community.

Q) Who will be required to wear a mask at Northwest Kidney Centers?

A) Masking will be required for ALL staff, patients, and visitors in patient care areas.

Q) Will the universal masking mandate be required indefinitely?

A) No, we will continue to monitor the King County Respiratory Virus dashboard. Once it is confirmed that acute respiratory virus diagnoses are below the alert threshold, we'll reassess the need for universal masking in our patient care areas.

Q) How are patients being notified of these changes?

A) We've put up posters about the masking requirement in all clinics.

Q) What if I work in a clinic outside of King County? Do I still have to wear a mask?

A) Yes. We take an organizational approach on how to respond to respiratory viruses (Covid-19, influenza, RSV), so changes to the policy apply to all NKC outpatient dialysis clinics.

Q) Where can I find the Covid-19 policy?

A) Both the policy and procedures are posted on PolicyStat.

Q) Do I still need to wear eye protection when in the patient care area?

A) Eye protection will be required for initiation of treatment and ending treatment. Eye protection is also required when there is an increased risk of blood exposure.

Q) Who do I contact if I have questions?

A) Please send an email to InfectionPreventionTeam@nwkidney.org.