Head Coverings: Surgical/Non-Surgical Use

Updated May 13, 2020

Use of Head Coverings In Non-Surgical Settings for Care of COVID-19 Positive Patients or PUIs

The CDC does not currently require the use of head covers such as Surgical bouffant for the care of Covid-19/PUI patients. Supply of surgical bouffant caps is to be conserved for use in the surgical and procedural areas as raw materials used to make these products are becoming more difficult to obtain.

Alternatives to surgical bouffant caps that can be considered if desired by the caregiver:
- Bouffant caps that are traditionally used for food and nutrition areas
- Shower caps
- Satin hair bonnets (often found in beauty supply stores)
- Staff may also consider procuring their own re-usable Cloth head covers
  - Colleagues will not be reimbursed for purchases made outside of our Procurement channels, and MercyOne is not responsible for maintenance of these head covers
  - Cloth Head covers should be laundered daily
  - If colleagues choose to procure their own head covers, they must adhere to local policy for professional attire.

Head coverings are not required or recommended. If a colleague chooses to wear a head covering, it is preferred for the colleague to keep the head cover on throughout their shift.

Colleagues may wear head coverings between COVID and non-COVID rooms all day while other PPE is changed out. Because it is not addressed by CDC PPE guidance, head coverings are not considered PPE. If the colleague removes the cover, e.g. during breaks or lunch:

- **Donning:**
  - Perform hand hygiene before donning a head covering
  - Don the head cover
  - Perform hand hygiene after donning

- **Doffing:**
  - Perform hand hygiene before doffing a head covering
  - Doff the head cover
  - Store the head cover in a separate paper bag.
  - Perform hand hygiene after doffing

- Head covers must be washed in hot water and laundry soap, adding bleach to the load.
Use of Head Coverings in Surgical Settings

Association of Operating Room Nurse’s (AORN) recommendation is to cover the scalp and hair when entering the restricted or semi-restricted areas. "The 2020 AORN Guidelines on Surgical Attire states that no recommendation can be made for the type of surgical head covering material. An interdisciplinary team, including members of the surgical team and infection preventionists, may determine the type of head covers that will be worn at the health care organization.

The evidence does not demonstrate any association between the type of surgical head covering material or extent of hair coverage and the outcome of SSI rates."

Surgical Head Coverings in the OR can include:

- Disposable surgical bouffants, hoods or surgeon’s caps
- Reusable head covers. This option during the Covid-19 Pandemic will help assure supply of required head coverings for staff.
  - Hospital policy should include
    - Fabric type: washable and non-linting (cotton or cotton/poly blend recommended)
    - Laundering frequency: At least daily, or more frequently if soiled
    - Laundering method: follow manufacturer’s recommendations
      - OSHA requires that any re-usable head coverings (or other attire) that may become contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious material must be left at the hospital for laundering
    - Use of reusable head coverings as part of perioperative attire also needs to be consistent with Surgical attire policy at the hospital.