

## Michelle Endresz

---

**From:** Heidi Chapman on behalf of Amy Tucker  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 17, 2023 9:00 AM  
**To:** Amy Tucker  
**Subject:** CMO Blast: Return to mandatory masking, COVID increasing

**Importance:** High

Effective immediately, mandatory masking is required by all staff, visitors, and patients in clinical areas of Upstate University Hospital, Upstate Community Hospital, and ambulatory clinical spaces.

Clinical areas are defined as any location patients gather, wait, transport through, or receive care. Masking is strongly recommended in all non-clinical areas.

Universal Covid testing is now mandatory for all patients being admitted to the hospital (in addition to testing for clinical purposes).

The updates to mandatory masking and testing protocols are due to EG.5, the new Covid variant circulating in Central New York.

The Covid EG.5 variant is causing:

- An increase in staff out of work sick with Covid.
- An increase in patients hospitalized with Covid.
- An increase in SARS-CoV-2 signal in both community and hospital wastewater testing.

The new mandatory masking and testing policies start now. The policies will be reviewed in 3 weeks.

We appreciate your compliance and helping to maximally protect our patients and each other.

Amy Tucker, MD, MHCM  
Chief Medical Officer  
Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, Norton College of Medicine