

## Wichryk Eye Masking Policy

**Please wear your mask and wear it properly throughout your time in our office. This means to keep the mask covering your nose and mouth.**

### Why do we ask you to mask?

- Wichryk Eye is a health care provider. We follow all CDC and American Optometric Association recommendations for stopping the spread of COVID19. You will see the same standards at any Lehigh Valley Health Network or St. Luke's providers' offices.
- The CDC says specifically, "Visitors, regardless of their vaccination status, should wear a well-fitting cloth mask, facemask, or respirator."
- The AOA (American Optometric Association) statement, "Patients and visitors of all health care facilities should wear their own well-fitting face mask upon arrival to and throughout their stay in the facility."
- From the Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA) – "The overwhelming majority of current COVID-19 cases are occurring in unvaccinated individuals, and significantly increasing vaccination rates are urgently needed to stop the spread of COVID-19 and save lives. Until then, mask wearing will help reduce infections, prevent serious illnesses and death, limit strain on local hospitals and stave off the development of even more troubling variants."
- Unfortunately, the pandemic is not over. As more of the US population gets vaccinated, mitigation efforts such as masking can be loosened as spread decreases.
- COVID19 virus is spread mainly through tiny, aerosolized droplets which can travel together for up to 27 feet and it is possible for the SARS-CoV-2 virus to remain suspended in the air and viable for hours.

### Health care providers see at risk patients.

- Health care providers are in the unique position of caring for those who are at higher risk for poorer outcomes from COVID19 infection.
- Many of our patients are immunocompromised due to:
  - o Cancer
  - o Autoimmune disease
  - o Taking immunosuppressant medications that often weaken the effectiveness of the COVID vaccines.
- We see children under 12 who do not yet have the opportunity to be vaccinated
- **We (age 2 and older) wear our masks, properly and throughout our time in the office, to protect the most vulnerable.**

We understand that mask wearing is not always comfortable, and we also realize that people have different opinions and beliefs on mask use, but we follow proven science (and we will not debate this with you) and ask you to follow the recommendations and our policies while here in the office.

Thank you for your cooperation in protecting our community and together we will get through this!