

On September 23, 2022, the CDC made several revisions to its COVID-19 guidance for healthcare settings and healthcare workers. While these national recommendations are noteworthy, Tennessee Retina also tracks community transmission rates here in Tennessee to assess the risk to our employees and patients. Given that we have recently seen reductions in reported COVID cases for 3 consecutive periods in our region and that our affiliated hospital colleagues have also instituted changes, the Board of Directors of Tennessee Retina have relaxed the MANDATORY MASKING POLICY. Please see the changes below, effective Friday, 10/28/22:

- Masks are optional for employees, patients, and visitors in all TNR administrative and clinic spaces.
- If a patient is masked and requests that the staff/doctor treating the patient also wear masks, we will comply with this.
- If a patient is showing or reports flu or COVID symptoms, we will assess that patient's need to be seen immediately and reschedule them when possible.
- If a patient with flu or COVID symptoms is assessed as needing to be seen, we will revert to our previous COVID protocols for treating that patient with suspected COVID (patient must wear a mask at all times, no family members unless required for patient assistance, staff will take additional COVID precautions).
- We still recommend masks for unvaccinated staff, patients, and doctors. We also recommend masks for people with a medical condition that could be impacted by COVID exposure.
- We will continue to monitor the community transmission rates and may modify our standards as necessary in the future.

We appreciate your diligence, patience, and consideration over the past 2+ years helping us protect the health of patients and staff during this pandemic. We successfully cared for hundreds of thousands of patients without a single known case of COVID transmission in our offices.

We sincerely thank you,
The TNR physicians