

Personal Protection Equipment

To help decide what type of personal protective equipment (PPE) needs to be worn by healthcare workers, you need to look at the risk of passing on micro-organisms (germs) to service users and staff, through contaminated clothing, skin or mucous membranes e.g. nose, mouth, eyes, by blood or body fluids, e.g. faeces (stools), urine and saliva. Wearing PPE helps to protect both service users and staff.

• Gloves



If you expect to come into contact with blood and/or body fluids, non-intact skin or mucous membrane, or the service user has a known infection, you should wear disposable gloves. Use the most appropriate type of gloves for the task and wear them as single-use items, changing them between each task.

Clinical gloves can be latex, nitrile or vinyl material. Be aware that latex gloves can cause skin sensitivity and allergies, and employers must provide alternatives to latex gloves for service users and healthcare workers who have a sensitivity to latex.

Good Practice

- Wash your hands or use alcohol hand rub immediately before putting on and taking off gloves.
- Do not wash gloved hands. Washing gloves rather than changing them is not safe practice.
- Do not apply alcohol hand rub to gloves as the alcohol hand rub may affect the integrity of the glove.
- Gloves should not be kept in uniforms or work wear pockets as they can easily become contaminated.

• Aprons



A single-use disposable apron should be worn whenever there is a risk of exposure of blood and/or body fluids, non-intact skin, mucous membranes or the service user has a known infection. Aprons must be put on before the member of staff is in contact with a service user, and should be taken off as soon as the activity is completed.

• Eye Protection

Safety glasses or a visor should be worn to prevent infection where there is a risk of splashing of blood and/or body fluids to the eyes. Re-useable eye protection should be decontaminated after use.

• Masks



A surgical mask should be worn to prevent infection when there is a risk of blood and/or body fluids splashing near to the nose or mouth. Masks may sometimes be required to be worn routinely, for example in the event of pandemic flu.

In any health and social care setting or service user's own home, dispose of PPE in accordance with local policy. Always wash hands or use alcohol hand rub after disposal of PPE.

PPE recap

Test your knowledge

Please tick the correct answer

	True	False
1. Alcohol hand rub can be applied to gloved hands.		
2. A new disposable apron should be worn for each new task.		
3. Before putting on and after removing gloves, hands must be washed or alcohol hand rub applied.		

Remember:

- Alcohol hand rub should not be applied to gloves, as it may affect the integrity of the gloves.
- Wear a new disposable apron and gloves for each new task undertaken on a service user.

Practical Activity *Please tick appropriate box when activity has been completed*

Check that your colleagues do not put gloves in uniform or work wear pockets.	
Check that your colleagues are aware that PPE should be removed after completion of each task.	