

Health and safety quick guide

General Guidance on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

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1. Introduction

You may be asked to wear PPE when undertaking your normal duties to reduce the risk of infection from Covid-19. This guidance is designed to give you some general and basic guidance on how to select, correctly fit and remove the main types of PPE you may use. This is to be used as an addition to any more detailed or specific instruction/training/guidance you may receive in relation to PPE for the roles you are undertaking as part of the risk assessment process.

Click [here](#) to view a table that helps to determine the PPE you may require.

2. Face Masks

There are three primary types of face mask –

- [Cloth face masks \(including homemade\)](#)
- [Surgical masks](#)
- [N95 Respirators](#)

Cloth face masks (including homemade face masks)



To prevent the spread of the virus from people without symptoms, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now recommending that everyone wears cloth face masks, such as homemade face masks, while in public places where it's difficult to maintain a 6-foot (2metre) distance from others.

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Recommendations include:

- Wear cloth face masks in public settings, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission, such as grocery stores and pharmacies.
- Don't put cloth face masks on children under the age of 2, people who have trouble breathing, people who are unconscious, or people who are unable to remove the mask on their own.
- Use cloth face masks rather than surgical masks or N95 respirators, as these critical supplies must be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders.

Benefits of Cloth / homemade face masks

- Cloth face masks can be made at home from common materials, so there's an unlimited supply.
- They may lower the risk of people without symptoms transmitting the virus through speaking, coughing, or sneezing.
- They're better than not using any mask and offer some protection, especially where social distancing is hard to maintain

Risks of Cloth/ homemade face masks

- **They may provide a false sense of security.** While homemade face masks offer some degree of protection, they offer a lot less protection than surgical masks or respirators. One study indicated that homemade face masks may be half as effective as surgical masks and up to 50 times less effective than N95 respirators.
- **They don't replace or reduce the need for other protective measures.** Proper hygiene practices and social distancing are still the best methods of keeping yourself safe.

Surgical Masks

Surgical masks are disposable, loose-fitting face masks that cover your nose, mouth and chin. They're typically used to:

- protect the wearer from sprays, splashes, and large-particle droplets
- prevent the spread of potentially infectious respiratory secretions from the wearer to others

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Surgical masks can vary in design, but the mask itself is often flat and rectangular in shape with pleats or folds. The top of the mask contains a metal strip that can be formed to your nose. Elastic bands or long, straight ties help hold a surgical mask in place while you're wearing it. These can either be looped behind your ears or tied behind your head.

N95 Respirators



An N95 respirator is a more tight-fitting face mask. In addition to splashes, sprays, and large droplets, this respirator can also filter out 95% of very small particles. This includes viruses and bacteria.

The respirator itself is generally circular or oval in shape and is designed to form a tight seal to your face. Elastic bands help hold it firmly to your face. Some types may have an attachment called an exhalation valve, which can help with breathing and the build-up of heat and humidity.

N95 respirators aren't one-size-fits-all. They actually must be **face fit-tested** before use to make sure that a proper seal is formed. If the mask doesn't seal effectively to your face, you won't receive the appropriate protection

After being fit-tested, users of N95 respirators must continue to perform a seal check each time they put one on. It's also important to note that a tight seal can't be achieved in some groups. These include children and people with facial hair.

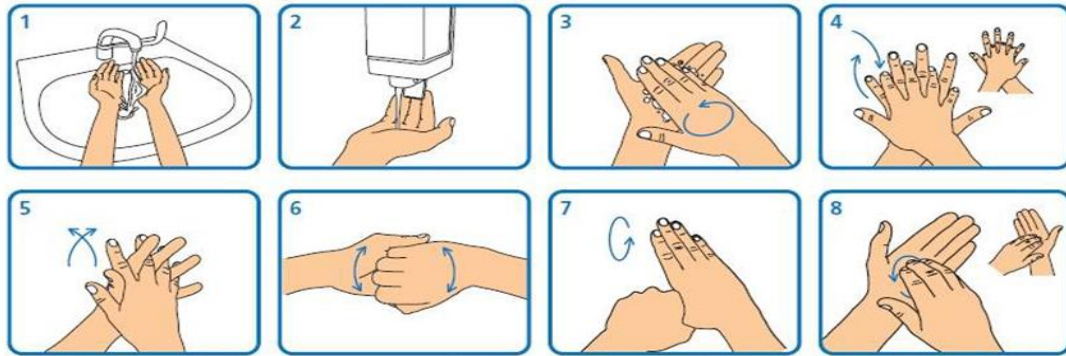
How to safely and correctly put on a face mask

Below are some general do's and don'ts with regard to safely and correctly putting on a face mask (not all will apply- as this is dependent on the type or style of mask being used)

Do-

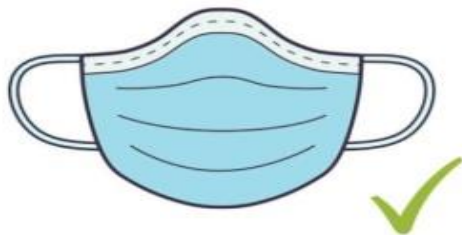
- **Before** putting on any mask- **Wash your hands**, for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or rub hands thoroughly with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

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- Check for defects- look for tears, rips, broken loops or straps etc.
- If applicable- Position the coloured side of the mask outward

**THE RIGHT WAY
TO WEAR A SURGICAL
MASK**
COLORED SIDE OUT, WHITE SIDE IN



**THE WRONG WAY
TO WEAR A SURGICAL
MASK**
WHITE SIDE OUT, COLORED SIDE IN



- If applicable/present- Ensure the metallic strip is at the top and positioned across the bridge of the nose. Mould this metallic strip to the shape of your nose by pinching and pressing down on it with your (clean) fingers
- Ensure the bottom of the mask is covering your mouth **and** chin
- Ensure the mask is a snug fit
- Replace the mask and/or filter if it becomes soiled or damp



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If the mask has

- Ear loops- Hold and position the mask by holding both loops and place one loop over each ear
- Ties- Hold the mask by the upper strings. Tie the upper strings in a secure bow near the crown of your head. Tie the bottom strings securely in a bow near the nape of your neck.
- Dual elastic bands- Pull the top band over your head position it against the crown, then pull the bottom band over your head and position it against the nape of the neck



Don't -

- Touch the mask once it is in position and secured on your face, as it may have pathogens on it
- Dangle the mask from one ear
- Hang the mask around your neck
- Re-use single-use masks

How to safely remove a face mask

Below is some general advice and guidance on the safe removal of a face mask.

- **Before** you take off the mask, wash your hands well or use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching the mask itself, as it could be contaminated. Hold it by the loops, ties, or bands only
- Carefully remove the mask from your face once you:
 - unhook both ear loops, or
 - untie the bottom bow first, followed by the top one, or
 - remove the bottom band first by lifting it over your head, then do the same with the top band
- Holding the mask loops, ties, or bands, discard the mask by placing it in a covered bin.
- After removing the mask, wash your hands thoroughly or use hand sanitizer.

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Click on the links below for visual guidance on how to fit/remove face masks

- [How to correctly fit and remove a N95 respirator](#)
- [How to correctly fit and remove a cloth mask](#)
- [How to correctly fit and remove a surgical mask](#)

3. Gloves

There are three typical glove types-



Nitrile Gloves.....

- Contain NO latex and powder free
- Are for the most puncher resistance
- Have a high level of touch sensitivity
- Mould to hand for free fit
- Good for wear extended periods of time
- Good for high risk infection situations
- Resist many chemicals
- Long shelf life
- Are **BLUE** to help identification

Latex Gloves....

- Fit like a second skin
- Have a high level of touch sensitivity
- Good for wear extended periods of time
- Good for high risk infection situations
- Are cost effective
- Are lightly powder for easy of fitting
- Are very elastic and strong
- Are biodegradable



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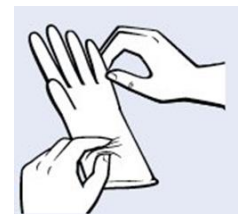
Vinyl Gloves....

- Contain NO latex
- Have a looser fit
- Are good for short term, low risk tasks
- Are the most economic option
- Have anti-static properties
- Are best for non-hazardous materials
- Are lightly powdered for fast fitting

PLEASE NOTE: Some people may be allergic to latex (or powder) so an alternative to Latex / powdered gloves should always be available.

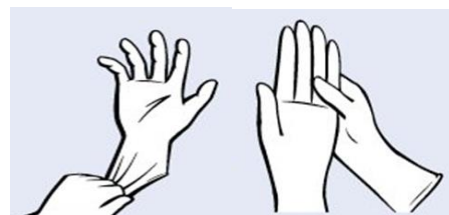
How to FIT Gloves safely

- **Before** putting on gloves - **wash your hands**, for **at least 20** seconds with **soap and water**, or rub hands thoroughly with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Make sure you are not wearing any jewellery, bracelets, watches or stoned rings and you select an appropriate size glove.
 - Open packaging carefully and remove one glove from the package and inspect it to be sure no pinholes or tears are present.



- If gloves are ambidextrous, they can be worn on either hand. If not, align the glove's fingers and thumb with the proper hand before fitting.

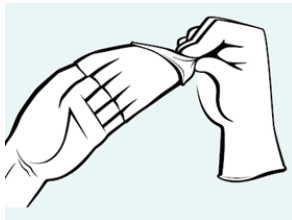
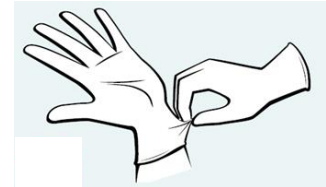
- Insert five fingers into the cuff and pull the cuff over the wrist.
- Check for a secure fit around the fingers and palm. The cuff should fit snugly around the wrist.



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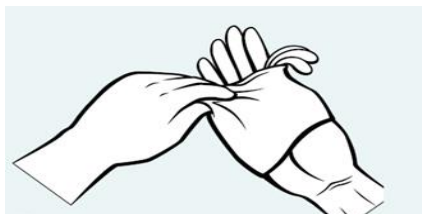
How to safely and correctly REMOVE Gloves

- Grasp the outside edge of the glove near the wrist.



- Peel off the outer glove and hold removed glove in the gloved hand.

- Slide the fingers of the hand under the remaining glove at the wrist and peel the second glove over the first glove being careful not to touch the outside of the glove



- Peel the remaining glove off from the inside, creating a “bag” containing both gloves. Discard directly into the approved waste bin.

Click on the link below for a visual guide.

- [Fitting and removing non sterile gloves](#)
- [Fitting sterile gloves](#)

4. Face Shield

A **face shield** is personal protective equipment (PPE) that provides barrier protection to the facial area and related mucous membranes (eyes, nose, lips). A face shield offers a number of potential advantages - as well as disadvantages – when compared with other forms of face/eye protection.

Advantages of face shields

- Relatively comfortable to wear, can feel less claustrophobic than masks
- Protect a larger portion of the face than a mask

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- Less fogging than goggles
- Less retained dermal facial heat than masks
- No fit testing is required
- Can be easily disinfected
- Wearers do not have to be clean-shaven
- Easy to put on and take off
- Users can speak unimpeded
- Can be worn with other PPE (goggles, face masks)

Disadvantages of face shields

- Glare
- Fogging
- Optically imperfect
- Some models may not fit properly over some respirators (e.g., duckbill filtering face piece respirators)
- Bulkier than goggles and safety glasses
- Peripheral fit poorer than protective facemasks

Face shields must always be used correctly if they are to provide effective protection. Face shields should be well-fitted, should remain in place during use and should not be touched once put on. Disposable, single-use face shields are to be discarded after single use as hazardous waste. Re-usable face shields must be decontaminated between use according to the manufacturer's instructions. Face shields that become damaged or soiled (e.g. with secretions or body fluids) should be discarded and replaced.

Putting on a face shield

Bending forward, hold on to the face shield with both hands, expand the elastic with your thumbs and place the elastic behind your head, so that the foam rests on your forehead. Once the shield is in place, check to make sure it covers the front and sides of the face and that no areas are left uncovered.

The following video from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides clear visual guidance: [Donning PPE – Put on Face Shield](#).

Taking off a face shield

Using gloves, remove the face shield slowly, and away from the body. Dispose of the face shield immediately as hazardous waste.

The following video from University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust provides clear visual guidance: [Removal of PPE](#).

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5. Overalls & Aprons

Those working in community and social care settings may be issued disposable overalls or aprons to help reduce exposure to the Covid-19 virus. Disposable aprons and overalls are subject to single use as per Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICPs), with disposal and hand hygiene after each patient contact, or 'single session'. SICPS are UK wide, and include:

The Standard Infection Precautions Policy includes:

1. Patient placement
2. Hand hygiene
3. Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
4. Personal protective equipment (PPE)
5. Management of Care Equipment
6. Control of the environment
7. Safe management of linen
8. Management of blood and body fluid spillages
9. Safe disposal of Waste
10. Occupational exposure management (including sharps safety)

Detailed information regarding the above SICPS can be found [here](#).

Note: A 'single session' refers to a period of time where a health and social care worker is undertaking duties in a specific clinical care setting or exposure environment.

Apron Fitting and Removal

Fitting –

1. Perform hand hygiene.
2. Remove an apron from the roll or dispenser. Open it outwards ensuring the inner surface faces the patient to prevent any contamination on its outer surface coming into contact with the patient.
3. Place the neck loop over your head
4. Position the apron to cover as much of the front of your body as possible. (Fig 3)
5. Fix the apron in place by tying the waist straps behind your back.



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Removal –

If disposable gloves are being used, they should be removed first, then:

1. Break the neck loop and waist straps.
2. Roll the apron downwards from your chest so the contaminated outer surface is folded inwards. Avoid touching the outer surface of the apron with your hands (Fig 4)
3. Dispose of the apron in a hazardous waste bin.
4. Perform hand hygiene.



Do's & Don'ts -

- **Do** don overalls or apron before other PPE
- **Do** dispose of as per SICPS after patient contact or a 'single session'
- **Don't** use disposable overalls or aprons for more than one 'single session'.

6. Additional Guidance

Guidance

[Recommended PPE for healthcare workers by secondary care clinical context](#)

[Public Health England]

[Quick Guide to Donning and Doffing Standard Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) for health and social care settings](#) [Public Health England]

[COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control](#) [Public Health England]

[Cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#)

Videos

[Fitting and removing PPE in Health and Social Care Settings](#)

[Fitting and removing PPE for Hospital/Clinical Staff](#)