

PRINCIPLES OF PPE FACT SHEET



MASKS:

Masks are examples of personal protective equipment (PPE) which are worn to protect the wearer from airborne particles and from contaminating the mucous membranes in the nose and mouth.

There are two types of masks used in primary care settings:

- Surgical and
- N95 or P2 masks

Surgical masks prevent large-particle droplets (viruses and bacteria), from reaching your mouth and nose but also protects others by reducing the exposure of your saliva and respiratory secretions to others

N95 – offers a higher-level protection as it is designed to attain a very close facial fit.

It is advised to receive training in fitting N95 masks correctly to avoid improper wearing so that each time an N95 is applied it is applied to the correct standard by performing a fit check.

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-respiratory-protection-program-COVID-19-pdf> Vic.gov Respiratory Program

Fit testing is different from fit checking, and if wearing an N95 mask regularly fit testing should be conducted every year or if the

wearer has lost >10kgs in weight. Most hospitals offer a fit test service for staff. Staff outside of the acute setting can access privately or find a provider using the following link: <https://resffit.org.au/find-a-fit-tester/>

People with facial hair will not get an adequate seal or protection from wearing an N95 and should consider removing the facial hair. N95 masks can be worn for longer periods (up to 8 hours), surgical masks however should be changed every 4 hours and if soiled, damp or when going for a break.

GOWNS

Gowns are disposable and intended for single patient or single session use. They derive of a fluid-resistant, material and are designed to protect the patient and wearer from the transfer of microorganisms, body fluids, and particulate matter.

As with masks, gowns can be worn for up to 4 hours and should be changed if soiled, damp or if the wearer needs to take a break.

GOGGLES/FACE SHEILDS

Goggles and face shields are used to protect the eyes. These can be worn for extended periods, but reusable eye protection requires cleaning and disinfection between use. Single use goggles should be disposed of [dhhs.vic.gov - personal-protective-equipment-ppe-covid-19](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-covid-19)

GLOVES

Gloves should be changed after each patient contact and hand hygiene performed before and after removing. [dhhs.vic.gov - glove-use-healthcare-setting-during-coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/glove-use-healthcare-setting-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

PRINCIPLES OF PPE COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. Question: How long can I wear my PPE gown for when vaccinating?**
 - For 4 hours or less if it becomes soil, damp or you need to go for a break.
 - If during an outbreak you are required to wear full PPE, your gloves need to be changed between every patient not your gown, mask and eye protection.
 - Further information is available on the following link
 - [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) - coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- 2. Question: What is the guidance around the re-use of PPE When running a vaccination clinic in General Practice where one person is walking through the clinic collecting the patient, then administering the vaccine, checking their eligibility, and walking through clinic to vaccines?**
 - *You are able wear you PPE during the whole clinic process. You would only need to don and doff when leaving a room if you were covid testing.*
 - [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) PPE Vic.gov](#)
 - [HVAC System Strategies to airborne infectious outbreaks Air exchanges - strategies for airborne infectious outbreaks](#)
- 3. Question: Do the staff need to remove scrubs/uniform before and after their shift in a respiratory practice if they are wearing full PPE?**
 - In the acute and community healthcare settings, the use of PPE (gown, protective eyewear, mask, and gloves) as recommended in COVID-19 national and state guidelines protects uniform scrubs/clothing, and therefore minimises any potential risk of becoming contaminated. HCWs are required to use appropriate PPE for any close contact with a person who has suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and they are within 1.5 metres.
 - The risk of uniform scrubs/clothing contamination from wearing appropriate PPE correctly is unlikely or extremely low. Recommendations for managing uniforms and personal apparel include:
 - having dedicated work clothes (these may be scrub uniforms or other uniform items)
 - cleanable and enclosed shoes
 - having adequate work clothing supplies to enable wearing of a clean uniform each shift
 - avoiding wearing uniforms home wherever possible (should have access to change room areas to allow change from uniform into a clean set of clothes at the end of the shift) during current COVID-Active status. If laundry service not available, uniform to be enclosed in a plastic bag for transport home for laundering
 - if above not possible, changing out of work clothes at the end of the work shift (go directly home not via another workplace, early learning centre, shopping centre, etc.)
 - if work clothes are taken home for laundering, it should be laundered as soon as practical

- laundering clothes at home using a hot-water wash cycle (70°C) with usual detergent and tumble dried
- if uniform has been contaminated with blood or body fluid, HCW needs to change out of soiled items immediately.

PPE is worn in accordance with the current Victorian COVID-Active PPE Tier 3 status Department of Health and Human Services Victoria | Victorian health service guidance and response to COVID-19 risks <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-health-service-guidance-and-response-covid-19-risks> Department of Health and Human Services Victoria PPE.

4. Question: We are a rural clinic that has recently has community cases of COVID-19. What PPE should we be wearing?

- In times where there is an increase of cases within the community it is recommended to wear all PPE when in close contact with patients.
- COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Allied Health in Private practice settings <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-06/COVID-19%20%20PPE%20for%20Private%20Practice%20Allied%20Hea.pdf> PPE Chart
- <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019> PPE during Covid

Australian guidelines for SARS-CoV-2 infection prevention and control of COVID-19 in healthcare workers||P2/N95 Respirators and Face (Surgical) Masks (magicapp.org)