

PPE and Me

These directions from the Health and Safety team describe how to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to protect yourself from Covid-19 at work. They draw from both general government [guidance](#) and our own specific context.

To find out more about Covid-19, and for general guidance on staying safe, read the FAQs on the intranet.

The full Dimensions health and safety advice relating to Coronavirus can be found on the intranet.

This PPE guidance applies to *everyone*, even if you have had and recovered from Covid-19 already.

Detailed guidance follows this summary table:

Circumstances	Activity	Disposable Gloves	Disposable Plastic Apron	Disposable coverall or gown	Surgical Mask	Fluid resistant surgical mask	Eye or face protection	FFP3 Respirator
No symptoms of virus, following risk assessment	Any activity even if less than 2 metres	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Person supported in shielded group without symptoms	All activities when in home	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Symptoms of virus, following risk assessment. No splash risk	Any activity within 2 metres	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
Symptoms of virus, following risk assessment. No splash risk	Activity more than 2 metres where task not usually requires PPE	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

Symptoms of virus, following risk assessment. Splash risk	Any activity within 2 metres	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
Symptoms of virus, following risk assessment. Splash risk	Activity more than 2 metres where task not usually requires PPE	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Symptoms of virus, following risk assessment.	Carrying out an aerosol generating procedure	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓

Do I need to wear PPE?

As the health of each person you support is known and has been carefully protected over recent weeks, if there are no symptoms of the virus, however mild, then no PPE is necessary (other than for usual good hygiene.) However, you should still:

- Maintain best practice on infection control
- Increase cleaning to reduce the risk of the virus on hard surfaces.
- Keep property ventilated by opening windows when safe and appropriate.
- Follow advice on hand hygiene.

The only exception is if someone has been identified by government as being within the extremely vulnerable group and has been advised to 'shield' (stay at home without visitors other than carers) for 12 weeks. In these circumstances a surgical mask, disposable apron and gloves should be worn by colleagues at all times.

What if the person I support has symptoms of Covid-19?

People with symptoms of the virus are increasing likely to be supported in their own homes due to the pressures on hospitals.

Early identification of the virus is essential to limit anyone else becoming ill within the service, especially with routine testing not yet available in the UK.

When should I assess each person for symptoms?

At the start of each shift period. Record your findings in the daily records and monitor the person through your shift.

Make sure you do a good handover to help the next person on shift assess the PPE they require.

What if I identify symptoms?

This is a critical time in keeping everyone around you safe. Guidance on what actions you need to take when a person you support has symptoms of the virus can be found on the intranet

If at any time symptoms of the virus are identified, however mild, then you should wear a fluid resistant surgical mask (compliant with BS/EN standards) at all times when at work.

When providing direct support, you should also wear:

- disposable apron
- disposable non-latex gloves

At this point you should assess the need for eye/face protection. Wear this if you anticipate possible contact with the person's body fluids: saliva (eg from coughing/sneezing), phlegm, blood, excretions or other fluids.

How long can I use the PPE for?

Aprons and gloves: These are single use. Wash your hands after every use. It is not appropriate for gloves to be worn continuously through the day to reduce the need for regular handwashing. Handwashing will destroy the virus and should be carried out frequently.

Fluid resistant surgical masks and eye/face protection: single sessional use in a pre-defined location such as the person's home, or if isolation is in place within the home then the isolated area. A session (which might, for example, be a shift) ends when you leave that location.

Our face visors are reusable but as we may be getting stock from lots of places including local donations you should always follow manufacturers' instructions on cleaning and disposal.

Note there is no evidence to show that discarding masks or eye protection in between supporting each person reduces the risk of infection transmission. In fact, it may actually increase transmission.



When do I wear an apron or a gown?

Wear a disposable plastic apron to protect your clothes from contamination when providing personal care and during cleaning.

What is a good surgical mask?

Fluid resistant surgical masks (FRSM) must be worn to stop you inhaling droplets of the virus when working within 2 metres of a person with symptoms. These should:

- Be well fitted covering both nose and mouth
- Not be allowed to dangle around the neck of the wearer after or between each use
- Not be touched once put on
- Be changed when they become moist or damaged
- Be worn once and then discarded

	
<p>Fluid resistant surgical mask (FRSM) (check it states IIR on the packaging)</p>	<p>FFP2 surgical mask Higher specification, for use in higher risk environments</p>

What is good face protection?

Regular spectacles are not considered adequate. You should protect yourself with one of:

- Surgical mask with integrated visor
- Full face shield/visor
- Polycarbonate safety spectacles or equivalent

I'm not happy with the risk assessment that has been done

If you don't think the PPE is sufficient, or feel you should wear PPE despite an assessment indicating that it is not required, please speak with your manager first.

How do I throw PPE away?

You should put used PPE in disposable rubbish bags. Put these into another bag, tie them securely and keep them separate from other waste. Keep them for 72 hours (3 days.)

Where PPE has been used only to protect against coronavirus, you can dispose of the bags through normal household waste after the 3 days.

Where PPE has been used in other circumstances (for example to meet other healthcare / clinical needs,) you should follow your normal method of disposal.

PPE should also be disposed of if it is damaged, soiled, damp, compromised or uncomfortable and where it is difficult to breathe through.

How do I store PPE?

You should store PPE in a clean, dry area away from contamination and close to where you'll be using it.

How long should I continue using PPE for?

Keep using PPE for at least 7 days (from when symptoms were first noticed.) After 7 days revert to the usual PPE you use for good hygiene, as long as the person with the symptoms has recovered and no-one else has symptoms.

In addition to these instructions, you should also:

- Follow any manufacturer's instructions on the use of PPE
- Be trained on putting on PPE and in particular how to take it off correctly. Training videos are available on Learning Connect
- Have access to the PPE that protects them for the appropriate setting and task
- Practise hand hygiene to exposed forearms, after removing any element of PPE
- Take regular breaks and rest periods.
- Contact your manager or local Health & Safety Advisor link with any further questions

N.B. The advice on COVID-19 is rapidly evolving as more is learnt about the virus. Further updates may be made to this guidance as new best practice emerges.