

AT A GLANCE

COVID-19: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Non-Medical Masks in Congregate Living Settings

07/07/2020



Introduction

This document provides information on personal protective equipment (PPE) and non-medical mask use for staff and residents of congregate living settings (e.g., shelters, group homes). It is intended to be used by administrators and staff members and provides guidance on what to wear when there is an outbreak in the facility and when there is not. The information in the document is based on the Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations](#). It is not intended for use in [long-term care facilities](#) or correctional/youth justice facilities and may not be applicable for children in congregate living settings. It should be noted that recommendations in this document may need to be adjusted depending on the particular congregate living setting and circumstances.

The document provides information on:

- [PPE and Non-medical Mask Use for Staff Members](#)
- [Non-medical or Surgical/Procedure Mask Use for Residents](#)
- [How to Put On PPE](#)
- [How to Take Off PPE](#)
- [Cleaning of Re-usable PPE and Non-Medical Masks](#)

For additional information on what PPE must be changed during a COVID-19 outbreak when working within cohorts when there is a shortage of PPE, please see [How to Cohort During an Outbreak of COVID-19 in a Congregate Living Setting](#) and [Cohorting in Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings](#).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is used to protect the wearer from becoming infected by others. PPE can include one or more of the following types of equipment: surgical/procedure mask (medical mask), eye protection (i.e., face shield, goggles, mask with visor attached), gown and gloves. [Cleaning your hands](#) (with liquid soap and water, or alcohol-based hand rub) is an important part of putting on and taking off PPE.

The choice of appropriate PPE staff should wear is based on a number of factors including:

- The [type of direct care](#) that is being provided to the resident
 - Direct care may include helping with feeding, bathing, washing, turning, changing clothing, toileting and wound care.
- The health status of the resident
- If there is an outbreak in the facility
- If the resident is in isolation on admission to the facility (14-day isolation is required when the stay is expected to be longer than 14 days)
 - Surgical/procedure mask, eye protection, gown and gloves are recommended for providing direct care to the resident who is in 14-day isolation on admission.
- If involved in screening on entry into the facility
 - Surgical/procedure mask and eye protection are recommended if the screener cannot be behind a physical barrier (e.g., cannot be behind a plexiglass barrier).

Masking for Source Control

Non-medical masks: [Non-medical masks](#) are not PPE, but are used to protect others from any respiratory infection the wearer may have. This is referred to as source control. The non-medical mask is intended to contain infected droplets from the mouth and nose of the wearer so they cannot spread to others. Recommendations for use of non-medical masks for residents and staff are outlined in the Ministry of Health's document, [COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations](#).

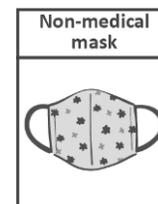
Surgical/procedure masks (medical masks): In some instances, a surgical/procedure mask is recommended for source control, such as for a resident when they are ill or for residents when there is an outbreak in the facility.

Masks and other face coverings should not be worn by children under 2 years of age, placed on anyone who cannot take them off without help or anyone who has trouble breathing. See the Public Health Agency of Canada's guidance on [Appropriate use of non-medical mask or face covering](#).

Staff Members: PPE and Non-Medical Mask Use

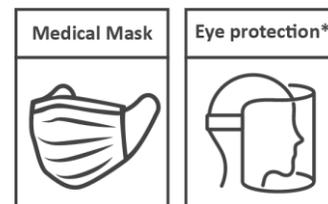
No Outbreak in the Facility

- Staff should wear a non-medical mask (e.g., cloth mask) for source control at all times, as recommended by the [Ministry of Health](#), except:
 - When eating (when staff should stay 2 metres from others) or when alone in a private space, OR
 - When they need to wear a surgical/procedure mask for PPE.
- As per usual practice, wear [appropriate PPE](#) when providing [direct care](#)^ to a resident. The choice of PPE is based on the type of care being provided and the health status of the resident.



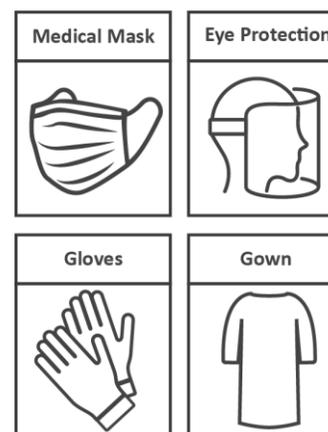
Facility in Outbreak: Non-Outbreak Area (if there is one)

- Staff should wear a surgical/procedure mask (medical mask) at all times during a shift, with or without eye protection, based on advice from the local public health unit*, except:
 - When eating (when staff should stay 2 metres from others) or when alone in a private space.
- As per usual practice, wear appropriate PPE when providing direct care^ to a resident. The choice of PPE is based on the type of care being provided and the health status of the resident.



Facility in Outbreak: Outbreak Area

- Wear a surgical/procedure mask (medical mask) and eye protection at all times, except:
 - When eating (when staff should stay 2 metres from others) or when alone in a private space.
- Gowns are added when resident interactions are possible. Gloves are also added when providing direct care^ to a resident.
- Gloves should be removed after use and should never be worn between residents. Gowns should be changed as per recommendations in the [cohorting document](#). Gowns should not be worn in common areas or staff-only areas.



^Direct care may include helping with feeding, bathing, washing, turning, changing clothing, toileting and wound care.

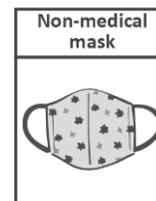
*Eye protection may not be needed in a non-outbreak area if the spread of the outbreak into this area is very unlikely (e.g., the non-outbreak area is in a completely separate building from the outbreak area).

Residents: Non-Medical or Surgical/Procedure Mask Use

No Outbreak in the Facility

Resident is well

- Offer a non-medical mask (e.g., cloth mask)
- Encourage resident to wear a non-medical mask if residents come and go from the facility and are or may be within 2 metres of others



Resident has symptoms that could be COVID-19

- Provide a surgical/procedure mask (medical mask)
- Encourage resident to wear a surgical/procedure mask when they are or may be within 2 metres of others

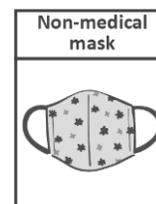


Residents in isolation upon admission because their stay is expected to be 14 days or longer should wear masks as outlined above.

Facility in Outbreak: Non-Outbreak Area (if there is one)

Resident is well

- Provide a non-medical mask
- Encourage resident to wear a non-medical mask if they have to be within 2 metres of others



Resident develops symptoms that could be COVID-19 s

- Provide a surgical/procedure mask (medical mask)
- Encourage resident to wear a surgical/procedure mask if they have to be within 2 metres of others



Facility in Outbreak: Outbreak Area

All residents (ill or well)

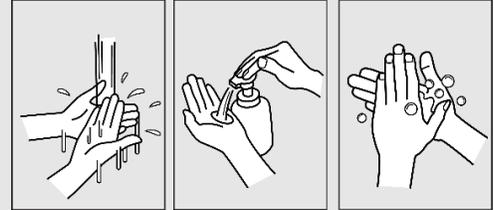
- Provide a surgical/procedure mask (medical mask)
- Encourage resident to a wear surgical/procedure mask if they have to be within 2 metres of others



How to Put on PPE

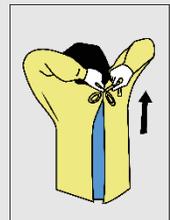
Step 1: Clean Your Hands

- Wash hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub for at least 15 seconds. See [How to Clean Your Hands](#).



Step 2: Put on Gown

- Tie neck and waist ties securely.



Step 3: Put on Surgical/Procedure Mask

- Place mask over nose and under chin.
- Secure ties, loops or straps.
- Bend metal to fit at top of nose.
- A mask with a visor also provides eye protection and is put on the same way as a surgical/procedure mask.



Step 4: Put on Eye Protection

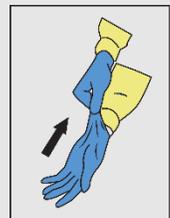
Examples of eye protection include goggles and face shield.

- Put on eye protection and adjust to fit.
- Face shield should fit across forehead.



Step 5: Put on Gloves

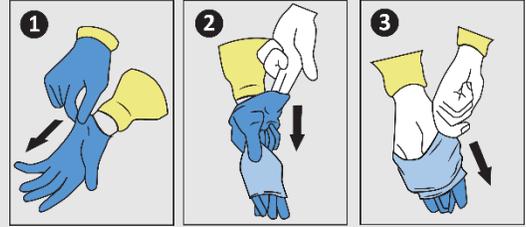
- Put on gloves, taking care not to tear or puncture gloves.
- If a gown is worn, the glove fits over the gown's cuffs.



How to Take off PPE

Step 1: Remove Gloves

- Pull outside edge near the wrist and peel away, rolling glove inside out.
- Place fingers under other glove and roll inside out.
- Put into the garbage.



Step 2: Remove Gown

- Untie the waist ties first, then the neck ties.
- Gently pull the gown forward off the body and turn inside out to keep the dirty side away from you. Roll into a bundle.
- Put into garbage, if disposable or dirty laundry container, if to be washed.



Step 3: Clean Your Hands

- See [How to Clean Your Hands](#).

Step 4: Remove Eye Protection

- Carefully take off eye protection without touching the front, which is considered dirty.
- Straps of goggles or face shield are considered clean.
- Put in garbage, if disposable, otherwise follow cleaning instructions.



Step 5: Take Off Masks

- Untie ties (bottom tie first) or take off ear loops, which are all considered clean, and pull forward off the head without touching the front, which is considered dirty.
- Put in garbage.



Step 6: Clean Your Hands

- See [How to Clean Your Hands](#).

Cleaning of Reusable PPE and Non-medical Masks

Gloves should never be re-used. They should only be used once, then put into the garbage. Always [clean your hands](#) after taking gloves off. PPE should always be changed when it becomes damp, dirty or torn.

Gowns

Gowns are either disposable or reusable.

- Do not share gowns.
- Only use gowns once.
 - Put disposable gowns into garbage after removal and clean your hands.
 - Wash reusable gowns with laundry soap in the washing machine using the hottest temperature setting available on the machine and dry well. Wash gowns separately from other laundry. Wear a gown and gloves when laundering gowns.

Eye Protection

Most face shields and goggles can be cleaned between use and then put back on. Check manufacturer's instructions for cleaning. If no instructions are available, use the following steps:

1. Put gloves on prior to cleaning eye protection.
2. Clean as follows:
 - **Using dish detergent and water:** Using a clean cloth with dish detergent, clean the inside followed by the outside. Rinse and allow to dry. Wipe the inside following the outside with alcohol. For faceshields, keep the foam and strap from getting wet.
 - OR
 - **Using disinfectant wipes and alcohol:** Using a disinfectant wipe, clean the inside followed by the outside. Allow to dry. Wipe the inside following the outside with alcohol. Allow to dry.
3. Remove gloves and clean hands.

Note: The straps or foam that are part of the face shield do not need to be cleaned. If they are dirty, throw out the face shield and get a new one.

Non-Medical Masks

- Do not share non-medical masks.
- Non-medical masks should be put in the laundry if worn that day and also put in the laundry if dirty. Wash with laundry soap in washing machine at the hottest temperature setting available on the machine and then dry well. Non-medical masks can be washed with other laundry.

For information on what PPE to leave on and change when moving between residents in the same cohort during a COVID-19 outbreak with a PPE shortage, see [How to Cohort During an Outbreak of COVID-19 in a Congregate Living Setting](#) and [Cohorting in Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings](#).

Sources

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