

## Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is a requirement of health and safety legislation.

It is used to protect staff and people you care for to reduce the opportunities for spreading infections.

It also protects the wearer from direct contact through splashing with blood and/or body fluids.

Personal protective equipment must be available for use by all staff. The most common types of PPE are:

- Disposable plastic aprons
- Disposable gloves
- Face protection such as eye protection and/or visor for the face

The decision to use PPE must be based on a risk assessment which determines if the task may cause a risk of contamination of blood or body fluids – to reduce the risks of transmission to both individuals and staff.

For example, if cleaning up a spillage of blood, cleaning equipment or handling soiled items of clothing then PPE should be worn.

When there is no contact likely with blood or body fluid contamination, such as dispensing medication or helping someone dress, then PPE is not normally required.

Throughout your day you will need to assess, on a task by task basis, whether personal protective equipment is needed and why it's needed – to protect you or to protect the person you are caring for.

All PPE must be correctly stored in a clean dry area such as a store room – away from areas of possible contamination - and be readily available in areas where the need is likely to be the greatest.

Disposable gloves come in a variety of sizes and should be close fitting. Jewellery must not be worn under gloves except perhaps for a wedding band.

Disposable gloves should be changed for each person you are caring for and each new task. Don't carry gloves in your pocket and never be tempted to wash gloves. The wearing of gloves is not a substitute for regular hand

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washing. Hands must be washed or use alcohol based hand rub after the removal of gloves.

Tasks that you assess as requiring disposable gloves may also require an apron to be worn. As with disposable gloves, aprons should be changed for each person you are caring for and each new task.

Face protection is sometimes needed when there is a risk of splashing to the face, for example, cleaning a piece of equipment that has been contaminated with blood and body fluids or when cleaning a large spill.

It's very important that all PPE is removed and disposed of in a safe way to reduce the risk for cross-contamination.

Gloves should be removed first, followed by apron and then finally eye protection. When you have finished removing all PPE you should always wash your hands or you can use alcohol based hand rub if appropriate.

The correct procedure to remove gloves is to:

- Grasp the outside of the glove with the opposite gloved hand; peel off
- Hold the removed glove in the gloved hand
- Slide the fingers of the ungloved hand under the remaining glove at the wrist
- Peel the second glove off over the first glove
- Ensure safe disposal in correct bin according to use and colour coding system

You should always assume your apron is contaminated and remove safely by:

- Firstly, unfasten or break ties
- Touching only the inside of the apron, pull the apron away from neck and shoulders lifting over head
- Fold or roll into a bundle
- Ensure safe disposal in correct bin according to use

Face protection is sometimes needed when there is a risk of splashing to the face, for example, cleaning a piece of equipment that has been contaminated with blood and body fluids or when cleaning a large spill.

- Remove by handling only the headband or the sides then clean and dispose of according to manufacturer's instructions

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All contaminated items must be disposed of safely into the correct colour coded waste bin.

## To break the chain of infection:

Remember:

- Wash your hands or use alcohol based hand rub after you finish removing all PPE
- Personal protective equipment is a requirement of health and safety legislation
- The most common types of PPE are gloves, aprons and face protection
- Disposable aprons and disposable gloves are used once only then discarded in the colour coded waste system appropriate to your area
- Use the correct procedure for the wearing and removal of PPE