

## AT A GLANCE

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

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## ARCHIVED DOCUMENT

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## 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. Always follow current Ministry guidance, [COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations](#)<sup>1</sup>, and any direction from the local Public Health Unit. This document is not intended for use in [long-term care facilities](#)<sup>2</sup> or [correctional/youth justice facilities](#).<sup>3</sup> 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 Medical Mask Use for Residents](#)
- [How to Put On PPE](#)
- [How to Take Off PPE](#)
- [Care of Reusable 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 [Cohorting in Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings](#).<sup>4</sup>

## 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: medical (surgical/procedure) mask, eye protection (i.e., face shield, goggles, mask with visor attached), gown, and gloves, as well as fit-tested N95 respirators for any aerosol-generating medical procedures (AGMP). [Cleaning your hands](#) (with liquid soap and water, or alcohol-based hand rub) is an important part of putting on and taking off PPE.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>
  - Direct care may include helping with feeding, bathing, washing, turning, changing clothing, toileting and wound care.
- The health status of the resident
- If the resident is under additional precautions
- If there is an outbreak in the facility
- If the resident is in isolation on admission to the facility due to having a partially immunized or unimmunized status. Medical mask, eye protection, gown and gloves are recommended for providing direct care to the resident who is in isolation on admission.
- If involved in screening on entry into the facility
  - Medical mask and eye protection are recommended if the screener cannot be behind a physical barrier (e.g., cannot be behind a polycarbonate barrier).

## Masking for Source Control

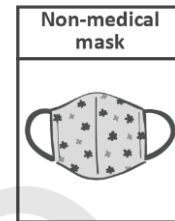
- **Non-medical masks:** [Non-medical masks](#) are not PPE, but are used to protect others from any respiratory infection the wearer may have.<sup>7</sup> This is referred to as source control. The non-medical mask is intended to contain infected droplets from the mouth and nose of the wearer so they 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](#).<sup>1</sup>
- **Medical (surgical/procedure) masks:** In some instances, a medical 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, or 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](#).<sup>8</sup>

# Staff Members and Visitors: PPE and Non-Medical Mask Use

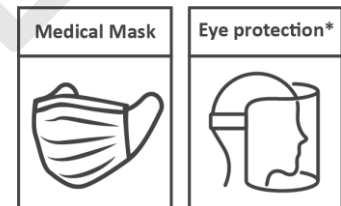
## No Outbreak in the Facility

- Staff and visitors should wear a non-medical mask (e.g., cloth mask) or a medical mask for source control at all times, as recommended by the [Ministry of Health](#),<sup>1</sup> except:
  - When eating (when staff should stay 2 metres from others) or when alone in a private space, OR
- As per usual practice, wear [appropriate PPE](#)<sup>6</sup> when providing [direct care](#)<sup>^</sup> 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

- Staff and essential visitors should wear a 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<sup>^</sup> 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 medical mask at all times, except:
  - When eating (when staff should stay 2 metres from others) or when alone in a private space.
- Eye protection and gowns are added when resident interactions are possible. Gloves are also added when providing direct care<sup>^</sup> to a resident.
- Gloves should be removed after use and should never be worn between residents. Gowns should be changed as per recommendations in [Cohorting in Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings](#).<sup>4</sup> Gowns should not be worn in common areas or staff-only areas.



<sup>^</sup>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 Medical Mask Use

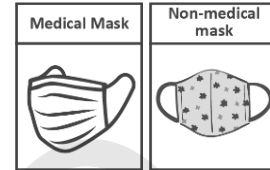
If tolerated and can be done safely, residents should be offered a mask to use when they are or may be within 2 metres of others or in shared spaces. The type of mask offered will depend on:

### No Outbreak in the Facility

**Resident is well:** non-medical mask (e.g., cloth mask)

**Resident has symptoms that could be COVID-19:** medical mask<sup>9</sup>

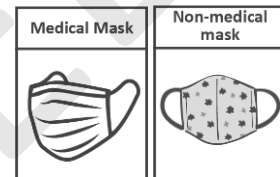
**Residents in isolation upon admission:** medical mask



### Facility in Outbreak: Non-Outbreak Area

**Resident is well:** non-medical mask (e.g., cloth mask)

**Resident develops symptoms that could be COVID-19:** medical mask



### Facility in Outbreak: Outbreak Area

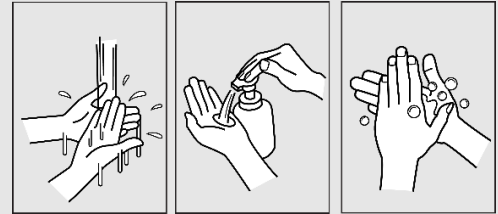
**All residents (ill or well):** medical mask



# How to Put on PPE<sup>10</sup>

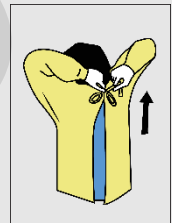
## Step 1: Clean Your Hands

- Wash hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub for at least 15 seconds. See [How to Clean Your Hands](#).<sup>5</sup>



## 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

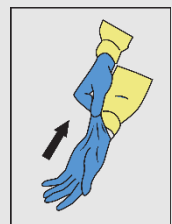
Examples of eye protection include goggles and face shield.

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



## Step 5: Put on Gloves

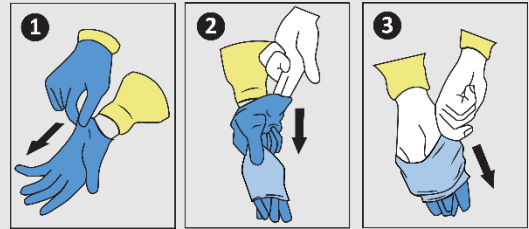
- Put on gloves, taking care not to tear or puncture gloves.
- If a gown is worn, the glove fits over the gown's cuffs.



# How to Take off PPE<sup>10</sup>

## 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](#).<sup>5</sup>

## 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](#).<sup>5</sup>

## Care 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.
  - Put reusable gowns immediately in laundry hamper or store in a way that will not contaminate others prior to washing. 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 are reusable and can be cleaned and disinfected between uses and then put back on. Do not reuse single-use equipment as it should be discarded. Check manufacturer's instructions for information on cleaning reusable eye protection. If no instructions are available, use the following steps:

1. Put gloves on prior to cleaning eye protection.
2. [Clean and disinfect](#): Using a disinfectant wipe, clean the inside followed by the outside. Allow to dry.<sup>11</sup>
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 soiled 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 [Cohorting in Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings](#).**<sup>4</sup>

## Summary of Revisions

**First published: July 2021**

New material in this revision is summarized in the table below.

Revision number	Date of Implementation	Description of Major Changes	Page
1	September 3, 2021	Updated PPE recommendations	Throughout
2	September 3, 2021	Updated cleaning and disinfection of reusable eye protection and provided link to an infographic on the subject	15

### Publication History

1<sup>st</sup> revision: July 7, 2020

2<sup>nd</sup> revision: September 16, 2021



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