

Guidance on the rational use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in hospitals in the context of COVID-19 disease

The rational use of PPE is a key measure to protect healthcare workers and prevent transmission of COVID-19 in healthcare settings.

This document outlines the recommendations for the rational use of PPE in hospitals in the current context.

In addition to using the appropriate PPE, frequent hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene should always be performed. Healthcare workers should discard PPE in an appropriate waste container after use and perform hand hygiene before donning and after doffing of PPE.

Setting	Target personnel or patients	Activity	Type of PPE or procedure
Healthcare facilities			
Triage*	Healthcare workers	Preliminary screening not involving direct contact.	Maintain spatial distance of at least 1 m. Surgical mask
	Patients with respiratory symptoms.	Any activity	Maintain spatial distance of at least 1 m. Provide surgical mask.
	Patients without respiratory symptoms	Any activity	No PPE required
Waiting areas until transfer (in hospitals where inpatient facilities are not available and patients awaiting transfer to designated hospitals)	Suspected cases of COVID 19	Any activity	Provide surgical mask Immediately move the patient to an isolation room or separate area away from others; if this is not feasible, ensure spatial distance of at least 1m from other patients.
Areas of patient transit (e.g., wards, corridors) ¹	All staff, including healthcare workers.	Any activity that does not involve contact with COVID-19 patients.	No PPE required
	All staff, including healthcare workers.	If involved in patient transfer	Surgical mask or and gloves

¹ (Have a designated route for the transport of patients within the hospital. Before transporting the patient, inform the destination unit of the patient's transfer. Make arrangements to clear the route of transport within the hospital (making announcement over the public address system or through staff). Make sure the patient is given a surgical mask.

Patient room ²	Healthcare workers	Providing direct care to COVID-19 suspected or confirmed patients.	NIOSH approved N-95 mask Impermeable isolation gown Two pairs of gloves Eye protection (goggles or face shield) Surgical hood or Cap Covered shoes and fluid resistant shoe cover or boots
		Aerosol-generating procedures performed on COVID-19 patients.	NIOSH approved N95 mask or FFP2 standard, or equivalent. Impermeable isolation gown Two pairs of gloves Eye Protection Apron Surgical Hood Covered shoes and fluid resistant shoe cover or boot
	Cleaners	Entering the room of COVID-19 patients.	NIOSH approved N-95 mask or surgical masks Fluid resistant gown Heavy duty gloves Eye protection Boots or closed work shoes and shoe covers Surgical cap or surgical Hood (Masks and eye protection can be shared between rooms of confirmed cases or between rooms of suspected cases)
	Visitors ³	Entering the room of a COVID-19 patient	Surgical mask Gown Gloves
Laboratory and biosafety cabinet	Lab technician	Manipulation of respiratory samples.	Surgical mask Fluid resistant gown Gloves Eye protection

***Triage of patients in the hospital**

² If cohort isolation of suspected cases of COVID 19 is practiced, the same set of PPEs should be used for all patients.

³ Visitors should not be allowed. If visitors must enter a COVID-19 patient's room, they should be provided with clear instructions about how to put on and remove PPE and about performing hand hygiene before putting on and after removing PPE; this should be supervised by a healthcare worker.

Administrative areas	All staff, including healthcare workers.	Administrative tasks that do not involve contact with COVID-19 patients.	No PPE required
Ambulance or transfer vehicle ⁴	Healthcare workers	Transporting suspected COVID-19 patients in the same compartment of the ambulance to the referral healthcare facility.	Surgical mask or NIOSH approved N95 mask Fluid resistant gowns Gloves Eye protection
	Driver	Involved only in driving the patient with suspected COVID-19 disease and the driver's compartment is separated from the COVID-19 patient	Maintain spatial distance of at least 1 m. No PPE required
		Assisting with loading or unloading patient with suspected COVID-19 disease.	Surgical mask or NIOSH approved N95 mask Fluid resistant gowns Gloves Eye protection
		No direct contact with patient with suspected COVID-19, but no separation between driver's and patient's compartments	Surgical mask
	Patient with suspected COVID-19 disease.	Transport to the referral healthcare facility.	Surgical mask
	Cleaners	Cleaning after and between transports of patients with suspected COVID-19 disease to the referral healthcare facility.	Surgical mask Fluid resistant gown Heavy duty gloves Eye protection Boots or closed work shoes

⁴ Always use ambulances with two compartments (separate driver's area), if available.

1. Display a signage to direct patients with a recent travel history to countries/areas with COVID 19 within 14 days or with a contact history with someone who had travelled to such an area and developed symptoms or a person suspected/diagnosed with COVID 19
2. Display these signage in all the main languages at the entrance to the hospital building
3. Use a checklist to identify suspected cases of COVID 19 during the triage of patients. Inquire the following:
 - a. Travel history
 - b. Respiratory symptoms
 - c. Contact history
4. Refrain from performing a detailed clinical examination of suspected patients in the triage area unless medically indicated
5. Healthcare workers can wear the same PPE for a shift in the triage area