



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

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To: Health Care Providers, Health Care Facilities, Local Health Departments
From: Zack Moore, MD, MPH, State Epidemiologist
Subject: Interim Guidance on the Use of PPE for Health Care Personnel Providing Care to Patients with Suspected or Confirmed SARS-CoV-2 Infection
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The North Carolina Division of Public Health (NC DPH) is providing updated guidance regarding the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health care personnel when caring for a patient with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).

When providing care to patients with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2, in addition to [Standard Precautions](#), health care personnel should wear the appropriate PPE including:

- A fit-tested, [NIOSH-approved particulate respirator](#) with N95 filters or higher
- Eye protection (i.e., goggles or a face shield that covers the front and sides of the face)

NC DPH no longer recommends routinely donning an isolation gown and gloves for patients with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 except in situations where there is a reasonable anticipation of contact with potentially infectious material, per Standard Precautions ([infographic](#)). NC DPH continues to recommend adherence to other aspects of the current CDC guidance, [Infection Control Guidance: SARS-CoV-2](#). Health care personnel should adhere to Standard Precautions and follow PPE recommendations according to [Transmission-Based Precautions](#) when applicable. Refer to CDC Standard Precautions guidelines and NC Standards for [Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure](#) for more information regarding occupational exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials.

The recommendations in this document are not regulatory in nature. When creating policies and procedures, health care facilities should ensure they meet regulatory requirements. Please note this guidance does not apply to nursing homes regulated under the NC Division of Health Service Regulation (DHSR) Nursing Home Licensure and Certification Section. These facilities are still required to develop and implement policies and procedures that are in line with currently posted CDC guidance.

Questions about this guidance should be directed to infectionprevention@dhhs.nc.gov.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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PPE for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Infection

Frequently Asked Questions

What does Standard Precautions mean in the context of SARS-CoV-2 PPE?

While NC DPH no longer recommends routinely donning an isolation gown and gloves for patients with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2, if there is a reasonable anticipation of contact with potentially infectious material, an isolation gown and gloves should also be worn, per [Standard Precautions](#).

What type of respirator should be used?

- Use a fit-tested, [NIOSH-approved particulate respirator](#) with N95 filters or higher.
- Ensure respirator use complies with [North Carolina Department of Labor Standards](#). This includes medical clearance, training, and fit testing.
- When N95 respirators are used as part of Transmission-Based Precautions, they should be discarded after doffing, during breaks, or before eating/drinking, per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Damaged respirators and respirators contaminated with blood, respiratory secretions, or bodily fluids should be discarded immediately.
- Reusable respirators, such as elastomeric respirators or Powered Air-Purifying Respirators (PAPR), should be cleaned and disinfected according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Health care personnel should avoid touching their respirator while in use and perform hand hygiene after adjusting or removing it.

What type of eye protection should be used?

- Eye protection should cover the front and sides of the face and protect from splash and spray.
- Disposable eye protection should be discarded after removal.
- Reusable eye protection should be cleaned and disinfected per the manufacturer's instructions after removal and when visibly soiled. Eye protection should be discarded when damaged.
- Health care personnel should avoid touching their eye protection while in use and perform hand hygiene after adjusting or removing it.

[Can I continue to use a gown and gloves for all patients with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 patients?](#)

- Health care personnel may voluntarily use PPE above the minimum guidelines and policies, as long as it does not introduce hazards or conflict with workplace requirements.

Resources

[CDC Infection Control Guidance: SARS-CoV-2](#)

[CDC Standard Precautions for All Patient Care](#)

[CDC NIOSH Personal Protective Equipment](#)

[CDC Isolation Precautions Guideline](#)

[CDC Transmission-Based Precautions](#)

[North Carolina DHHS COVID-19 Information](#)

[North Carolina Interim Guidance for the Management of Healthcare Personnel with Acute Respiratory Viral Infections](#)

[Washington State Department of Health Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Recommendations](#)