Personal protective equipment (PPE)

LCC IPC Guidance

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infectionprevention@lancashire.gov.uk

Importance of personal protective equipment (PPE)

What is PPE?

PPE is equipment which protects you from clients' blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions. Examples of PPE include gloves, aprons, eye and face protection.

Why wear PPE?

PPE is important as it protects the client and yourself from the transmission of harmful microorganisms, such as norovirus, MRSA, E.coli, etc.

Gloves

- Gloves must be worn for invasive procedures, contact with sterile areas, open skin or mucous membranes, and all activities that have been assessed as carrying a risk of exposure to blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions, or to sharp or contaminated equipment.
- Gloves must be worn as single-use items.
- They must be put on immediately before an episode of client contact or treatment and removed as soon as the activity is completed.
- Gloves must be changed between caring for different clients, and between different care or treatment activities for the same client.

Aprons

- A disposable plastic apron must be worn if there is a risk that clothing may be exposed to blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions**.**

- Disposable plastic aprons must be worn as single-use items, for one procedure or one episode of direct client care and then disposed of correctly.

Masks & goggles

- Masks and goggles must be worn where there is a risk of blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions splashing into the face and eyes.
- Respiratory protective equipment, for example a particulate filter mask, must be used when clinically indicated, but are rarely required in social care.

Storing PPE

PPE must be properly looked after and stored when not in use, for example in a dry, clean cupboard. If it is reusable, it must be cleaned and kept in good condition. PPE must not be stored inappropriately where there is risk of contamination.

Donning and Doffing

Aside from factors related to PPE design, meticulous donning and doffing of PPE is a vital step in reducing contamination of healthcare workers caring for service users with transmissible infectious diseases.

Putting on PPE

Before putting on your PPE, make sure you:

- drink some fluids.
- tie hair back.
- remove jewellery.
- check which items of PPE you need.
- check PPE in the correct size is available.

To put on your PPE safely and correctly:

1. Clean your hands and wrists using alcohol-based hand rub or gel, or use soap and water.
2. Put on apron and tie at waist.
3. Put on face mask.
4. Fit mask around nose – cover mouth and chin.
5. Put on eye protection.
6. Put on gloves.

Taking off PPE

To take off your PPE safely and correctly:

1. Remove gloves.
2. Clean hands and wrists (and forearms if necessary) with alcohol-based hand rub or gel, or use soap and water.
3. Remove apron – do not touch the outside front of the apron, this will be contaminated.
4. Clean hands and wrists (and forearms if necessary) again with alcohol-based hand rub or gel, or use soap and water.
5. When 2 meters from the client, carefully remove eye protection by the sidearms or side straps. Discard or disinfect for next use.
6. Clean hands and wrists (and forearms if necessary) again with alcohol-based hand rub or gel, or use soap and water.

7. Remove mask – do not touch the front of the mask but remove by the ear loops or ties.
8. Clean hands and wrists (and forearms if necessary) again with alcohol-based hand rub or gel, or use soap and water.
9. If required, put on a clean face mask before contact with others in a care setting or service.

Please see link below for donning and doffing poster.

[Guide to donning and doffing PPE: Droplet Precautions (publishing.service.gov.uk)](publishing.service.gov.uk)

Appendix 1

Guide to donning and doffing PPE: Droplet Precautions

for health and social care settings

Donning or putting on PPE

Before putting on the PPE, perform hand hygiene. Use alcohol handrub or gel or soap and water.
Make sure you are hydrated and are not wearing any jewellery, bracelets, watches or stoned rings.

1. Put on your plastic apron, making sure it is tied securely at the back.
2. Put on your surgical face mask, if tied, make sure securely tied at crown and nape of neck. Once it covers the nose, make sure it is extended to cover your mouth and chin.
3. Put on your eye protection if there is a risk of splashing.
4. Put on non-sterile nitrile gloves.
5. You are now ready to enter the patient area.

Doffing or taking off PPE

Surgical masks are single session use, gloves and apron should be changed between patients.

1. Remove gloves, grasp the outside of the cuff of the glove and peel off, holding the glove in the gloved hand, insert the finger underneath and peel off second glove.
2. Perform hand hygiene using alcohol hand gel or rub, or soap and water.
3. Snap or unfasten apron ties the neck and allow to fall forward.

Snap waist ties and fold apron in on itself, not handling the outside as it is contaminated, and put into clinical waste.

4. Once outside the patient room. Remove eye protection.
5. Perform hand hygiene using alcohol hand gel or rub, or soap and water.
6. Remove surgical mask.
7. Now wash your hands with soap and water.

Please refer to the standard PPE video in the COVID-19 guidance collection:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-use-for-non-aerosol-generating-procedures

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