

PPE Guidance for Care of COVID–19 Patients

The novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is transmitted primarily by airborne droplets, but inoculation of mucous membranes by contaminated hands also may occur. The following guidelines are derived from current CDC and NYSDOH recommendations, which are not concordant. This guidance prioritizes NYSDOH regulatory requirements pending resolution of the disparity with CDC recommendations. Supplies of all PPE may at times be constrained due to national demand.

1. Adherence to the basic principles of Standard Precautions, including properly performed hand hygiene is the core element of protection.
 - a. A fluid repellent isolation gown and disposable nitrile gloves must be worn at all times. Care must be taken to prevent self-contamination when removing PPE.
(<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/ppe/ppe-sequence.pdf>)
 - b. Eye protection (goggles or a face shield) is required.
2. Patients with suspected COVID-19 should have a facemask applied and be placed in an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR, “negative pressure room”) when available.
 - a. If no AIIRs are available, a private room may be used, and the door must remain closed.
 - b. Aerosol generating procedures (eg, bronchoscopy) must be done in an AIIR.
3. A facemask or N95 respirator must be used for all patient contact.
 - a. Facemasks may be used for routine patient contact.
 - b. A properly fitted N95 respirator must be used for aerosol generating procedures. Fit testing can be arranged by contacting your chief of service.
 - c. Respirators and facemasks will be stored in secure areas such as the nurse manager or nursing supervisor offices and must be requested for use.
 - d. Powered Air Purifying Respirators (PAPRs) may be used, if available.
 - e. Respiratory protection should not be removed until OUTSIDE of the patient room, taking care to remove the respirator/mask using straps while not touching the respirator/mask itself. Perform hand hygiene once removed.
4. Initial evaluation of a suspect case, including collection of nasopharyngeal/oropharyngeal specimens, may be done in a private room with the door closed. Full PPE as described above must be used.