Home and Community-Based Service Providers

Use and Conservation of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE does not replace physical distancing, frequent handwashing, or not touching your face, eyes, and mouth.

When PPE is in short supply, your agency should consider taking steps to optimize PPE supplies.

- Use PPE according to the table below and understand how to safely don (put on) and doff (take off) the PPE.
- Conserve necessary PPE through extended use and limited reuse, when applicable.

When to Wear PPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>PPE to Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Going inside homes.</td>
<td>A well-fitting face mask (or cloth face covering if face mask is unavailable). Maintain physical distancing of at least six feet whenever possible; limit close contact time if unable to distance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work requiring close physical contact with people who are well.</td>
<td>A well-fitting face mask (or cloth face covering if face mask is unavailable). Use additional PPE, such as gloves, if coming into contact with blood or bodily fluids.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work requiring use of cleaning products for an extended time.</td>
<td>A well-fitting face mask (or cloth face covering if face mask is unavailable). Use disinfectants according to the label’s instructions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work requiring close physical contact with people who are ill, including people who are confirmed or suspected positive for COVID-19.</td>
<td>N95 respirator mask (or well-fitting face mask if respirator not available), gloves, and additional PPE including face shield (or goggles if face shield is unavailable), and gown or single-use coveralls, if possible. Note, N95 respirator masks require the wearer to be medically evaluated and fit-tested to the mask. If the wearer is unable to be fit-tested, a well-fitting face mask should be used instead.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Cloth face coverings are not intended to protect the wearer from the virus, but may prevent the spread of the virus from the wearer to others. Because of this, a well-fitting face mask is preferred as it may offer the wearer more protection in addition to protecting others.
PPE is used to prevent exposures, which prevents infections. Providers should understand their supply chain, assess their PPE use, optimize supplies before they have shortages, and reach out to their local health department or county emergency manager to determine whether local supplies are available.

Providers should use the conventional PPE capacity as often as possible; extended use and limited reuse strategies are only utilized until conventional status can be restored.

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**PPE and Hand Washing Best Practices**

**Face Masks**
- During home visits, participants and providers should wear a well-fitting face mask or cloth face covering (if medically tolerated).
- If PPE supply requires removal and storage of a face mask or cloth face covering for future use, store in a clean, sealable paper bag or breathable container. Dispose of storage paper bags daily and wash container before reuse.
- Wash cloth face coverings daily.

**N95 Respirator Masks**
- N95 respirator masks may be used when working with a participant with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. This type of mask requires the wearer to be medically evaluated and fit-tested to the mask. If the wearer is unable to be fit-tested, a well-fitting face mask should be used instead.
- Providers interested in obtaining a free fit-testing kit can request one here.

**Gloves**
- Throw away disposable gloves after each participant and as needed during the visit.
- Wash hands before putting on and after taking off gloves.
- Do not wear double gloves.
- Do not sanitize gloves with hand sanitizer.

**Eye Protection (Face shields, Goggles)**
- Use eye protection when working with a participant with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- Try to minimize touching and adjusting eye protection while providing care.
- Clean and disinfect eye protection after removal. Store clean eye protection between uses in a clean, sealable paper bag or breathable container. Dispose of storage paper bags daily and wash container before reuse.
PPE and Hand Washing Best Practices

Gowns
- Wear a gown when providing care for participants with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, if possible, or when there is a chance of direct contact with blood, body fluids, and/or potentially infectious materials.
- Reuse of gowns or single-use coveralls is not recommended due to the risk to the wearer.

Hand Hygiene
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash with soap and water often.
- Wash hands when entering and exiting the residence to travel to a new location.
- Wash hands after coming in contact with contaminated PPE.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your elbow rather than your hands.

COVID-19 Vaccine
You should get a COVID-19 vaccine when it is available to you.

Additional Resources
- CDC: Guidance on PPE Optimization
- WI DHS Guidance on PPE
- CDC: Information on Cloth Face Covers
- WI DHS: How to Make a Cloth Face Covering Without Sewing
- CDC: Website for Hand Hygiene
- CDC: Training Course for Hand Hygiene
- CDC: COVID-19 Vaccine
- WI DHS: Where You Can Get Vaccinated