

Personal protective equipment (PPE) requirement for community care providers who are providing care in people's place of residence

Includes aged residential care, hospice, home and disability support, and mental health

In the context of COVID-19, in some cases more precautions than usual are advised, to protect both the client and the health care worker.

When you do not know someone's COVID-19 status, please ask the following risk assessment questions prior to the interaction where possible, or maintain physical distancing at the start of the interaction while they are asked:

1. Does the patient/client have new or worsening respiratory symptoms including one of the following: cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, coryza (runny nose) or temporary loss of smell, with or without fever?
2. Have they been in contact in the last two weeks with others who have been unwell with respiratory symptoms or fever, or are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19?
3. Is the patient/client at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (as per www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-health-advice-general-public)?

If 'yes,' then this person may have COVID-19. They need to be provided a surgical mask to wear while supporting them to have a formal assessment through their GP or Healthline. If you need to provide any essential cares while awaiting this assessment, please refer to **table 1** for advice on required PPE. If you do not need to provide essential care, please put on a surgical mask and maintain physical distancing of 1 metre if possible.

If the answer is 'yes' to question 2 or 3 and maintaining physical distancing of at least 1 metre is not possible, the care provider should wear a surgical mask, irrespective of the type of care to be provided.¹ Additional PPE may be required depending on the nature of the care to be undertaken, as outlined in **table 2.**

Table 1: When providing care to people who **have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or are a suspected, probable or confirmed case of COVID-19**

	 Hand Hygiene [‡]	 Surgical Mask	 N95/P2 Mask ^{‡*}	 Eye Protection [*]	 Gloves	 Fluid Resistant Gown
Providing essential client care	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓

Table 2: When providing care to people who **do not have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and are not a suspected, probable or confirmed case of COVID-19**

	 Hand Hygiene [‡]	 Surgical Mask	 N95/P2 Mask ^{‡*}	 Eye Protection [*]	 Gloves	 Plastic Apron
Providing non contact or personal care (not involving contact with blood or body fluids)	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Providing care that may involve exposure to blood, body fluids, secretions, and excretions	✓	After risk assessment identifies there is a risk and it's not possible to maintain physical distancing of 1 metres.	✗	Standard precautions should be used for all patient care activities as usual. This means wearing the correct PPE based on your risk of exposure to blood, body fluids, secretions and excretions. See FAQ about Standard Precautions for more information.		

Please refer to guidance on donning and doffing of PPE and Ministry information on COVID-19. www.health.govt.nz/ppe-health. Please dispose of PPE safely.

¹ This guidance provides an additional level of protection for the very low risk of potential asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic transmission between the health care worker and patient/client. Additional PPE may be required depending on the nature of the care to be undertaken.

* Face shield or goggles. Prescription glasses are not classed as eye protection. Remember to clean reusable eye protection between use.

[‡] Perform hand hygiene according to the 5 moments for hand hygiene www.handhygiene.org.nz

^{‡*} N95/P2 mask is only necessary for Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs). Discuss what procedures this might be relevant for in community settings with your local DHB IPC team.