



UK Health
Security
Agency

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) recommendations for unpaid carers

What PPE to wear and when – an illustrative guide



This guide outlines personal protective equipment (PPE) advice for unpaid carers who do not live with the person they care for. Other unpaid carers may also choose to use this guide. It should be used alongside local policies where they exist such as in care homes or day centres.

It refers to, flu, respiratory or COVID-19 symptoms.

Examples of which are:

- respiratory symptoms: cough, sneeze, runny nose, sore throat
- flu symptoms: high temperature, headache, runny nose, sneeze, cough, sore throat aches and pains
- COVID-19 symptoms: cough, temperature, loss of taste or smell.

Scope of guidance

This is additional guidance to your normal care practices. It provides advice on the recommended use of PPE during the current phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you are an unpaid carer you should ensure you wear the correct PPE for the situation in which you are providing care. Below are the four examples of situations that you might encounter. For each we describe the PPE that you should wear.

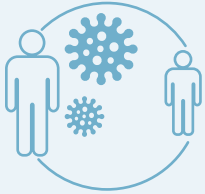
1. When you are within 2 metres of the person you are caring for who has COVID-19 or flu like symptoms such as coughing, high temperature or loss of taste or smell.
2. When providing personal care, involving potential contact with blood or body fluids.
For example, helping a person to wash or use the toilet.
3. When you are within 2 metres of a person you are caring for and contact with blood or body fluids is not likely. For example, providing a meal, companionship.
4. When you are more than 2 metres from the person you are caring for and undertaking domestic duties.

Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread

Follow current COVID-19 government guidance here:

www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do#keeping-yourself-and-others-safe

**Personal protective equipment (PPE) is not effective on its own.
The following are also important:**



staying away
from others
when you are ill



open windows
where possible



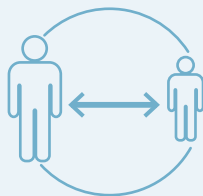
clean your
hands



staying away from
work when you are ill



frequent
cleaning



You don't have to social distance but you and the person
you care for may still want to. It is up to you both.

For coughs and sneezes:



catch it



bin it



kill it

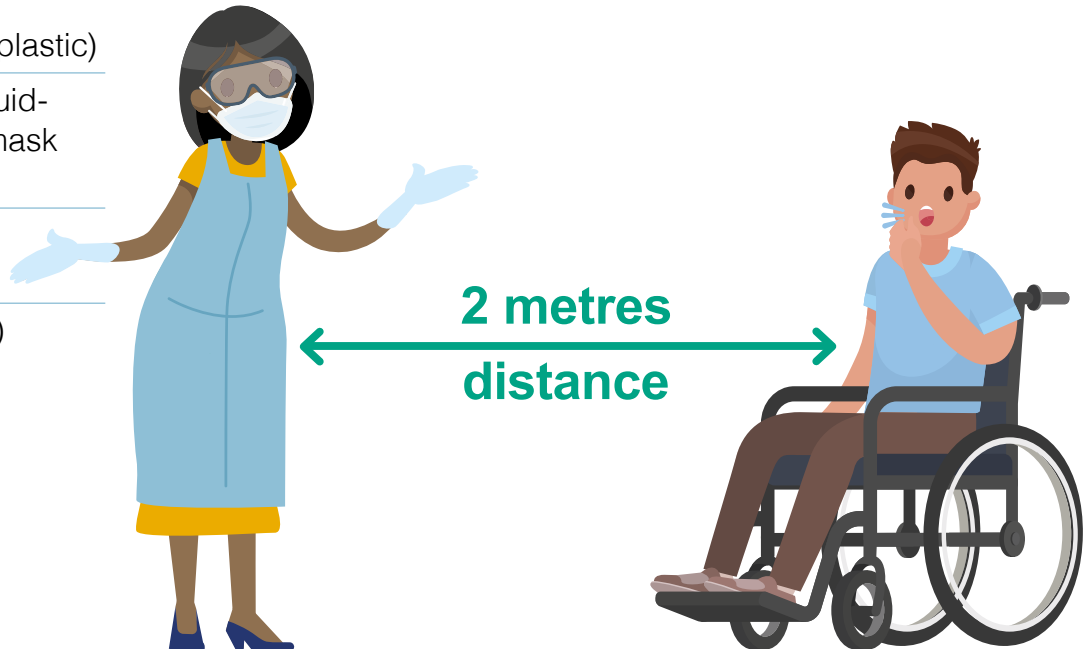
1 When you are within 2 metres of the person you are caring for who has COVID-19 or flu like symptoms such as coughing, high temperature or loss of taste or smell

apron (disposable plastic)

mask (single use fluid-repellent surgical mask Type IIR)

eye protection (see Page 6)

gloves (disposable)



2 When providing personal care to someone with no COVID-19 or flu symptoms but involving potential contact with blood or body fluids. For example, helping a person to wash or use the toilet

If the person you are caring for has any symptoms of infection such as a cough or high temperature or has tested positive for COVID-19 follow example 1.

apron (disposable plastic)

mask (fluid-repellent surgical mask Type IIR)

eye protection if there is a risk of splash in to your face with blood or body fluids (see Page 6)

gloves (disposable)

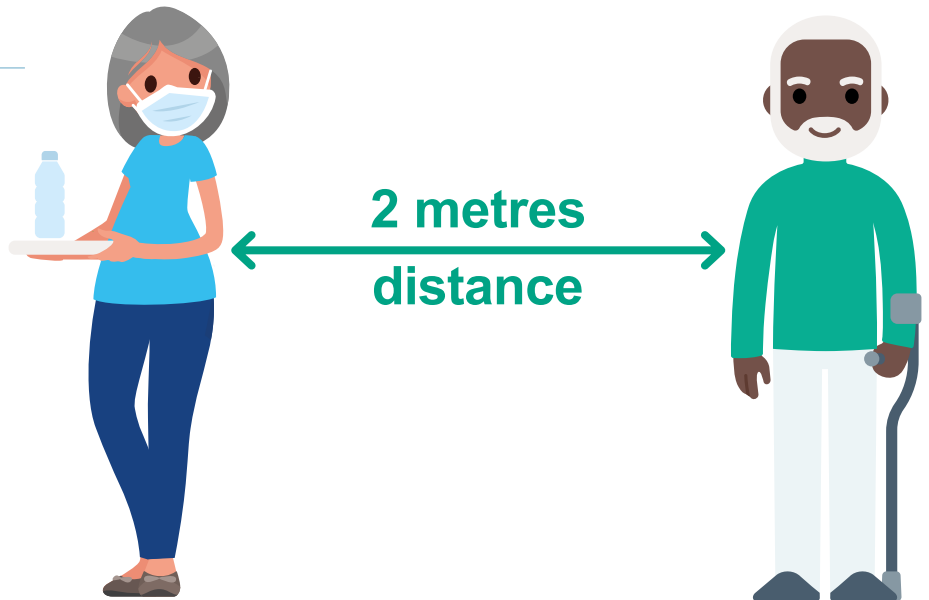


3 When you are within 2 metres of a person you are caring for and contact with blood or body fluids is not likely. For example, providing a meal, companionship

If the person you are caring for has any symptoms of infection such as a cough or high temperature or has tested positive for COVID-19 follow example 1.

Type I or II surgical mask or
Type IIR

no apron and gloves required
(unless you would normally
use them for the task you
are doing)

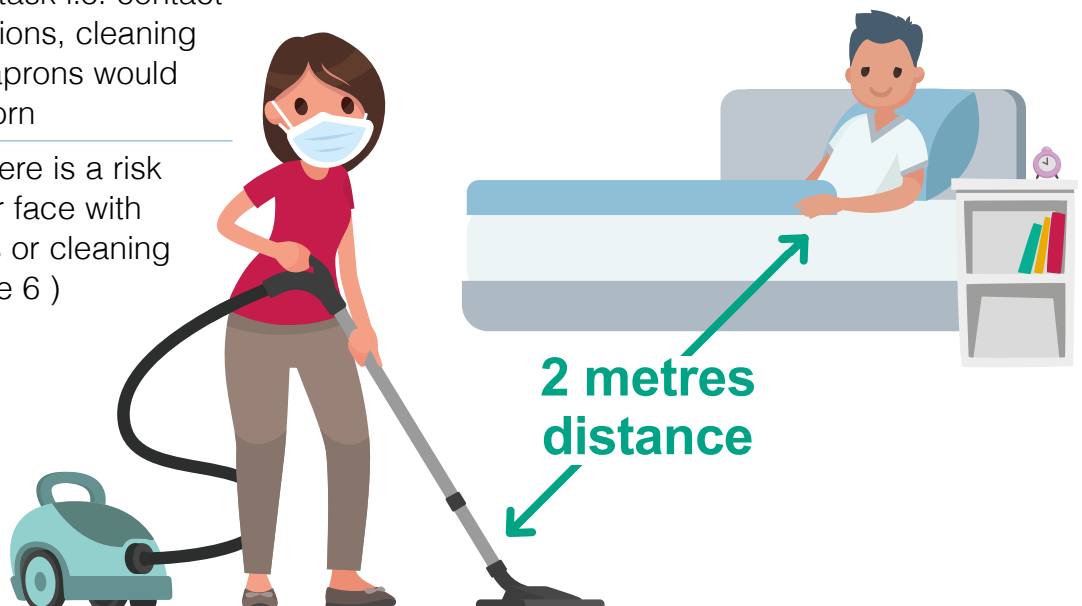


4 When you are more than 2 metres from the person you are caring for and undertaking domestic duties

Type I or II surgical mask or
Type IIR

depending on the task i.e. contact
with cleaning solutions, cleaning
toilet, gloves and aprons would
also need to be worn

eye protection if there is a risk
of splash in to your face with
blood / body fluids or cleaning
solutions (see Page 6)



What you need to know about using PPE

Use PPE safely:

- gloves and aprons should be changed between each person you are caring for
- if you are caring for more than one person in the same place, you can wear your masks and eye protection for more than one person as long as no-one you are caring for has COVID-19 or an infection
- clean your hands before putting on and after removing your PPE
- remove your PPE when you finish your care visit or duties
- remove your PPE when you take a break e.g. to drink, eat or use the toilet
- put on new PPE for your next episode of care

Put on and remove PPE at least 2m away from the people you are caring for

Do not re-use PPE items unless they are clearly marked as re-usable:

- gloves, masks and aprons must be thrown away after use
- some types of eye protection are re-usable, they must be cleaned according to the manufacturer's instructions or local infection prevention and control protocol

Eye Protection:

- spectacles are not eye protection. If you wear spectacles and eye protection is advised, a visor is recommended.
- take off your eye protection if it is damaged, dirty or uncomfortable
- clean your eye protection when you remove it, before next use
- if your eye protection is for single use only then throw it away after use

Clothing

If your clothing becomes splashed with blood or body fluids we recommend that you launder it as soon as possible:

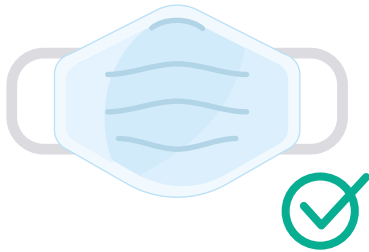
- separately from other items
- at the maximum temperature the fabric can tolerate, then iron or tumble dry



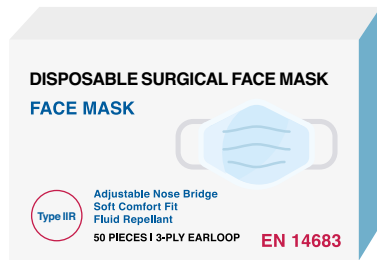
Put on and take off PPE items according to this video

https://youtu.be/-GncQ_ed-9w

Surgical Masks



DISPOSABLE TYPE IIR SURGICAL



All surgical masks usually have:

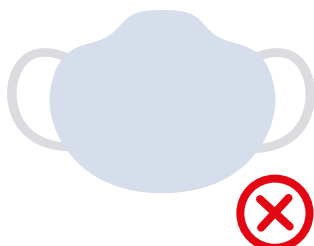
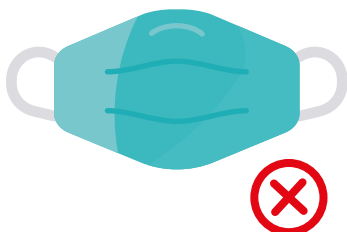
- a pleated style
- ear loops or ties
- adjustable nose band

There are several types of surgical mask. Type I and Type II surgical masks have multiple layers of non-woven material. They are suitable for tasks in examples 3 and 4. They are not fluid resistant.

When delivering personal care or caring for someone with a respiratory infection (see examples 1 and 2) we advise the use of Type IIR surgical masks. These have 4 layers of non-woven material, one of these layers is fluid resistant.

Type IIR surgical masks protect you by providing a fluid repellent barrier to spray / droplets produced by the person you are caring for (for example, when they cough or sneeze) and protect them from secretions or droplets from your mouth, nose and lungs.

- Please shape the nose band around your nose to get a good fit.
- Please extend the pleats to ensure your nose, mouth and chin are covered.
- If your mask has a coloured side, unless the instructions say otherwise, wear the coloured side facing outwards, white side against your face.
- You should not touch your face mask or eye protection unless it is to put it on or remove it
- Do not dangle your face mask or eye protection around your neck or place on the top of your head



- Surgical masks do not have exhalation valves or vents. Do not wear masks that do.
- Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for surgical masks.
- Respirators (sometimes referred to as FFP3s) are not surgical masks. They are required for certain procedures called aerosol generating procedures. Special training is required for their use, further information can be found here www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-use-for-aerosol-generating-procedures

Please speak to a healthcare professional if you need further advice.

Further information on PPE and Infection Prevention and Control in community and social care settings:

How to work safely in care homes

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-how-to-work-safely-in-care-homes

PPE guidance for use when undertaking aerosol generating procedures

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-use-for-aerosol-generating-procedures

How to work safely in domiciliary care

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-how-to-work-safely-in-domiciliary-care

COVID-19: infection prevention and control (IPC)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control

COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-illustrated-guide-for-community-and-social-care-settings

Further wider support is available from the Carers UK and Carers Trust websites

www.carersuk.org
[carers.org](https://www.carers.org)

Resources for care workers working with people with learning disabilities or autism

COVID-19 guide for care staff supporting adults with learning disabilities or autistic adults

www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19/learning-disabilities-autism/care-staff

Dementia in care homes and COVID-19

www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19/dementia/care-homes

Quick guides for putting on and taking off PPE

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-use-for-non-aerosol-generating-procedures

My 5 moments for hand hygiene

www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Your_5_Moments_For_Hand_Hygiene_Poster.pdf

Free PPE for COVID-19 needs to unpaid carers who do not live with the person or people they care for can be accessed through local authorities and local resilience forums

www.gov.uk/guidance/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-local-contacts-for-care-providers