

# Infection Prevention and Control Toolkit for Designated Caregivers and Essential Care Partners

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# Infection Prevention and Control Toolkit

- Our care teams respect the need of patients, residents, and clients. We want family members, spouses, friends, or other primary support persons or caregivers involved in their care. Designated caregivers and essential care partners are important partners with the health care team. You bring support, care, and presence to patients, clients, and residents. Your presence helps the health care team provide safe, quality care.
- As a care partner, you may help with:
  - › Your loved one's personal hygiene, movement, eating, dressing, and grooming
  - › Your loved one's communication
  - › Supporting their mental, emotional, and social wellbeing
- This pamphlet explains how to prevent the spread of infection to yourself and others. You may also get more information and specific procedures to follow during your visit. Please review this pamphlet, as needed.
- Feel free to ask a member of the health care team if you have any questions. We welcome your feedback about this pamphlet and the information you are given. Our goal is to provide the best care and support we can to you and your loved one.

## Monitoring your health

- Please closely monitor your health each day. **Do not** come to the facility if you do not feel well, or if you have had any of these symptoms in the past 48 hours (2 days):
  - › A new cough, or a cough that is getting worse
  - › A new fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F) or chills
  - › Sore throat
  - › Runny or stuffy nose
  - › Headache
  - › Trouble breathing
  - › New diarrhea (loose, watery poop)
  - › New nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) or vomiting (throwing up)

## **If you start to feel sick or have any symptoms after your visit to:**

- A hospital nursing unit:
  - › Please call the unit.
- A long-term care facility:
  - › Please call the main phone line of the facility.

This tells the health care team to monitor your loved one more closely for any symptoms.

## **If you start to have any of these symptoms while visiting a hospital or a long-term care facility:**

- › Wash your hands.
- › Put on a medical face mask.
- › **Do not** continue to interact with your loved one.
- › Tell a member of the health care team about your symptoms.
- › Leave the facility. **Do not** come back to the facility until you are feeling better and have not had a fever for at least 24 hours (1 day).

## **Hand hygiene (cleaning your hands)**

- You must wash or sanitize your hands often. Cleaning our hands is the best way to stop the spread of germs in health care settings, the community, and at home. There are 2 ways to clean your hands:

### **1. Hand washing with soap and water**

- Do this when:
  - › Your hands look dirty
  - › After you use the bathroom
  - › Before preparing food

### **2. Alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizer)**

- You can use hand rub most of the time during your visit. It is available throughout our facilities. Please use it often during your visit, including:
  - › When you arrive at the facility
  - › Before going into a patient's or resident's room
  - › Before helping your loved one eat or handle their meal tray
  - › Before and after helping with your loved one's care
  - › When you leave a patient's or resident's room
  - › When you leave the facility
  - › Any time you feel you should

Good Hygiene Stops the Spread of Germs

# How to Clean Your Hands with Sanitizer



1

Apply 1 to 2 pumps of alcohol-based hand sanitizer to palm of dry hands.



2

Rub palms of hands together.



3

Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm.



4

Rub in between and around fingers.



5

Rub the back of each hand with the palm of the other hand.



6

Rub each thumb with the other hand.



7

Rub hands until they are dry.



**Do not use towel or paper towel.**



**If your hands look dirty, please use soap and water to wash them for at least 20 seconds.**



*Updated September 29, 2020*



For information visit [novascotia.ca/coronavirus](https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus)

Good Hygiene Stops the Spread of Germs

# How to Wash Your Hands



1

Wet your hands with warm running water.



2

Add soap and scrub for 15-20 seconds.



3

Remember to get every part of both hands.



4

Rinse the soap off under running warm water.



5

Dry your hands with a clean towel.



6

Use the towel to turn off the tap.



**When soap and water are not available, please use alcohol-based hand sanitizer and rub all parts of your hands for at least 15 seconds.**

*Updated May 28, 2020*

## Masks

- There are times when you will be asked to wear a **medical mask** (also called a procedure mask), like:
  - › When there is an outbreak on a unit
  - › When more people in the community have respiratory illnesses (like during cold and flu season)
- When a facility asks everyone coming into a facility to wear a mask, this is called **universal masking**. This means that everyone must wear a mask while they are in the facility. This includes staff, family, and visitors.
- If this happens, you will be given a medical mask when you enter the facility. **Please wear this mask at all times while you are in the facility.**
- **Clean your hands before and after putting your mask on, taking your mask off, or moving your mask.**
- **The mask must cover your mouth and nose.**
- **Do not eat or drink while visiting your loved one.**

### Correct way to wear a medical mask

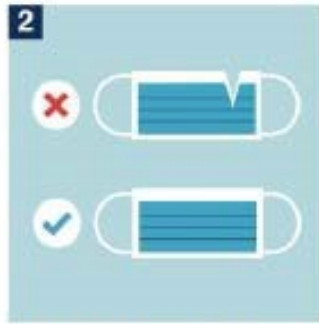


- Face shields **cannot** be worn instead of a mask. A face shield protects your eyes, but it **does not** protect other people if you cough or sneeze.
- If your medical mask becomes dirty or wet, please tell a staff member. You may need to replace it with a new mask.

# HOW TO WEAR A PROCEDURE MASK



1 Wash your hands with soap and water for 20-30 seconds or perform hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub before touching the face mask.



2 Check the new mask to make sure it's not damaged.



3 Ensure colour side of the mask faces outward.



4 Locate the metallic strip. Place it over and mold it to the nose bridge.



5 Place an ear loop around each ear or tie the top and bottom straps.



6 Cover mouth and nose fully, making sure there are no gaps. Pull the bottom of the mask to fully open and fit under your chin.



7 Press the metallic strip again to fit the shape of the nose. Perform hand hygiene.



8 Do not touch the mask while using it. If you do, perform hand hygiene.



9 Replace the mask if it gets wet or dirty and wash your hands again after putting it on. Do not reuse the mask.

## Removing the Mask



1 Perform hand hygiene.



2 Do not touch the front of your mask. Lean forward, gently remove the mask from behind by holding both ear loops or ties.



3 Discard the mask in a waste container.



4 Perform hand hygiene.

*These materials were adapted with permission from the BCCDC and the British Columbia Ministry of Health.*



## Visiting other patients, residents, or clients

- For privacy and safety reasons, please check with a nurse before visiting other patients, residents, or clients in the facility.
- **Do not** sit on a patient's bed. Chairs are available.
- **Do not** use patient bathrooms. Please ask a staff member where the public bathrooms are.
- You may visit public areas of the facility (like the cafeteria, places of prayer and meditation).

## Cough and sneeze etiquette

To lower the risk of spreading germs when you cough or sneeze:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- Throw the used tissue in the garbage and clean your hands.
- If you do not have a tissue:
  - › Cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow, **not** into your hand.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. This is where germs can enter your body.
- Clean your hands before touching your face.

### Correct way to cover a sneeze



# Cough and Sneeze Etiquette



----- **Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue.**



----- **Throw the used tissue in the garbage and wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub immediately.**



----- **If you don't have a tissue, cough and sneeze into your elbow, not your hand. Wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub immediately.**



----- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.**



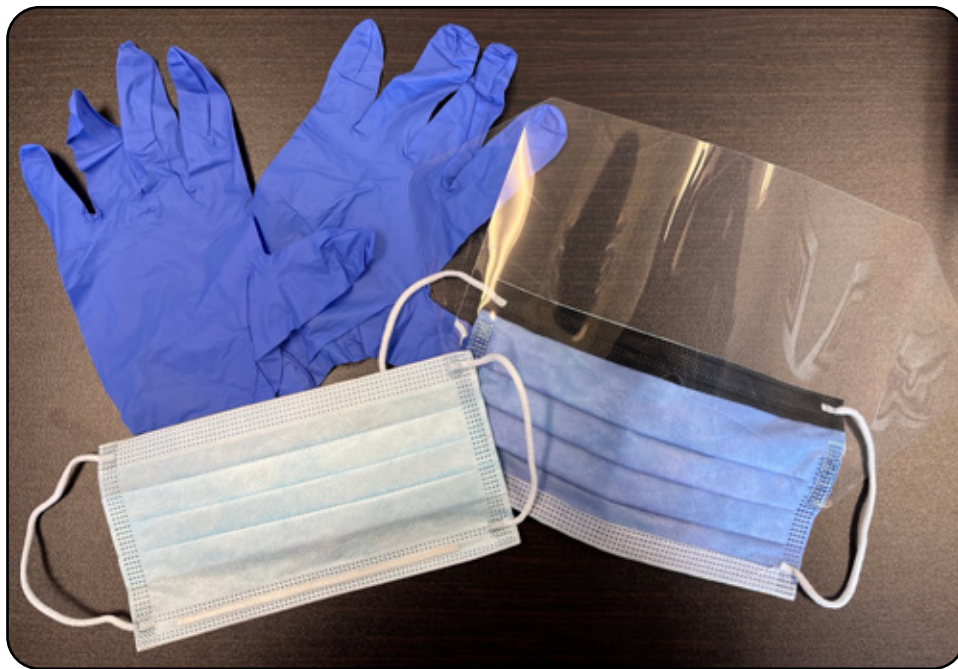
----- **If you need to touch your face, wash your hands first.**

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- You may need to wear gloves during your visit. Wear gloves if you are going to touch anything that may make your hands dirty (like helping your loved one in the bathroom). Always clean your hands before putting gloves on and after taking them off. Throw used gloves in the garbage.
- Sometimes, additional precautions (extra steps taken to prevent infection) are needed to keep germs from spreading. In these cases, you may need to wear a gown, gloves, a mask, and eye or face protection. A member of the health care team will show how to properly put on and take off PPE, as needed.

**Note:** It is common to see different colors of PPE in different facilities. This means that it has been bought from a different company. All PPE used in our facilities has been carefully reviewed to meet health care standards.

### Examples of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



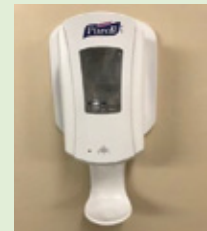
## Guide to Putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

for Designated Caregivers, Family/Essential Care Partners, and Family Caregivers

1. **Ask.** Please ask a member of the healthcare team to help you put on PPE.



2. **Hand Hygiene.** Use alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizer). If your hands look dirty, hand wash with soap and water.



3. **Long-Sleeved Gown.** Make sure the gown covers from the neck to knees, and to the wrists. Tie at back of the neck and waist.



4. **Medical Mask.** Masks are secured by placing loops over the ears or by ties at the back of the head. Mold the nose band to fit around the bridge of your nose. Fit the mask snugly to your face covering the mouth, nose and below the chin.



5. **Face/Eye Protection.** There are several types of face/eye protection. Examples are a mask with attached visor, or full-face shield. All must cover the eyes or the face. Note that eyeglasses are NOT considered eye protection.



6. **Gloves.** There are different sizes of gloves. Choose the size that is comfortable. If a gown is worn, the cuffs of the gloves are pulled over the cuffs of the gown.



Developed by IPAC June 2024

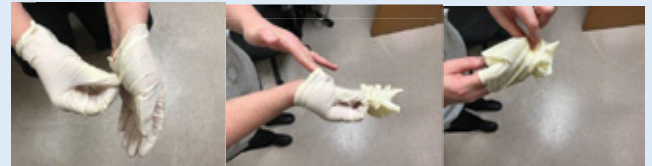
# Guide to Removing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

for Designated Caregivers, Family/Essential Care Partners, and Family Caregivers

**1. Ask.** Please ask a member of the healthcare team to help you remove PPE. You can easily contaminate yourself removing soiled PPE so help is recommended.



**2. Gloves.** The outside of gloves are dirty. Use the glove to glove or skin to skin technique to remove soiled gloves. Discard in garbage can after removing.



**3. Hand Hygiene.** Use alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizer). If your hands look dirty, wash with soap and water.



**4. Long-sleeved Gown.** Unfasten ties. Grasp the outside of the gown at the back by the shoulders and pull the gown down over the arms. Turn gown inside out during removal and roll into a bundle. Discard the gown into a garbage can. Never rip a gown off.



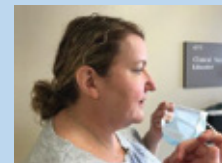
**5. Hand Hygiene.** Repeat Step 3.



**6. Face/Eye Protection.** Use the headband or earpieces to remove. Carefully pull away from the face. Discard into a garbage can.



**7. Medical Mask.** Do not touch the front of the mask. Untie the ties at the back of the head or lift the ear loops to remove. Allow the mask to fall away from the face and discard into a garbage can.



**8. Hand Hygiene.** Repeat step 3.



## Vaccination

- Keeping your vaccinations up to date is an important way to keep yourself and your loved one safe. Vaccinations are safe and proven to help stop the spread of infections.
- We encourage you to get:
  - › An influenza vaccine (flu shot) each year
  - › Other immunizations (like COVID shots) as recommended by Public Health or your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner)
- While your loved one is in a hospital or a long-term care facility, the health care team will offer them vaccinations, so that together, you will have the best defense to keep each other healthy.

## How to keep yourself healthy

- Being healthy helps your body to fight off infections. To help keep your immune system strong:
  - › Eat healthy foods (like fresh fruits and vegetables, fatty fish [like salmon]).
  - › Stay active. People who exercise regularly are less likely to get sick.
  - › Wash your hands often, especially before touching your face, before eating, and after using the bathroom.
  - › Keep your hands away from your face, especially your eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - › Stay away from people who are sick.
  - › Keep common surfaces (like door handles, light switches, phones) clean and free of germs.
  - › Get enough sleep. People who get a good night's sleep are less likely to pick up viruses (like the common cold virus).
  - › **Do not** smoke.
  - › **Do not** drink too much alcohol.
  - › Take care of yourself. It is OK to take a day or 2 away from visiting to look after yourself.

## What your care team expects from you

- To help prevent the spread of infections during your visit:
  - › Clean your hands before going into a patient's or resident's room, before touching food, before and after helping with care, and at the end of every visit.
  - › If you are sick or do not feel well, consider calling or visiting virtually (use FaceTime or video chats) instead of in person. Even a cold can be very serious for a patient or resident.
  - › Limit the number of visitors in a room at one time. Make a schedule for family members and friends so that everyone does not visit at the same time. This lowers the number of people who can spread germs.
  - › If you see signs at the entrance to your loved one's room, check with a nurse before entering. Sometimes additional precautions may be needed. A member of the health care team will help you. Please follow all their instructions so that you stay safe during your visit.

## Animal (pet) visits

- Spending time with animals is good for our mental health and happiness. Whether it is a service dog, a therapy dog, or a personal pet, the facility has rules about animal visits. These rules help to keep the animal and everyone in the facility safe. If you have questions, please ask a member of the health care team.
- For more information, ask a member of your health care team for pamphlet 1954, *Animal Visits*, or visit:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/1954](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/1954)

**Hand hygiene is one of the most important ways to stop the spread of germs.**

