

An Important Update from the Infection Prevention Team

The Why Behind Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) | 10/11/22

Gloves

- Gloves are used for all direct client care as part of **standard precautions** to protect the health care workers hands from contamination from any potentially infectious substance when providing direct, hands-on client care. **Gloves are never a substitute for hand washing or hand decontamination.**
- Gloves must be changed promptly after use and between clients so as not to expose the next client to potentially infectious contaminants or other organisms.



Eye protection (goggles, face shields)

- Eye protection is used for all direct client care as part of **standard precautions** to protect the health care worker's face and eyes from exposure to any potentially infectious substances when providing direct, client care that involves risk of exposure to splashes, sprays, or aerosols.
- Re-usable eye protection must be cleaned and disinfected at the end of each shift so as not to expose the next client or employee handling/wearing the eye protection to potentially infectious contaminants or other organisms.



Gowns

- Gowns are used for all direct client care as part of **standard and transmission-based precautions** to protect the health care worker's clothes from contamination when there is risk of exposure to blood or bodily fluids, or splashes or sprays.
- When gowns are used to protect the health care worker as part of standard or transmission-based precautions, they must be changed between clients so as not to expose the next client to potentially infectious contaminants or other organisms.



Surgical masks

- Surgical masks are used as part of **transmission-based precautions** to protect the health care worker's nose and mouth from exposure to organisms that are spread via **droplet transmission**. Surgical masks protect the health care worker from exposure to droplet particles that may be generated when the client coughs or sneezes, and should be worn for the duration of the client's illness. This duration can vary depending on the disease process.
- Surgical masks must be changed between clients so as not to expose the next client to potentially infectious contaminants or organisms.



Surgical N95 masks

- **Surgical N95 masks** are used as part of **transmission-based precautions** to protect the health care worker from inhaling organisms that are spread via **airborne transmission**.
- When caring for a client who is symptomatic, suspected, or confirmed to have COVID-19 or any disease that is known to spread via airborne transmission (eg, Tuberculosis), Surgical N95 masks should be used to protect the health care worker from exposure to droplet particles that may be generated when the client coughs or sneezes as well as airborne particles that may be suspended in the air for the duration of the client's illness. This duration can vary depending on the disease process.

