



## PANDEMIC PRACTICE ADVICE 4: PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

EFFECTIVE:	MAY 19, 2020
REVISED – EFFECTIVE:	MAY 25, 2020 MAY 26, 2020 June 8, 2020

**Please consult the website regularly for potential revisions to these documents.**

**Revision 1:** PPE for patients with communication, swallowing, hearing and cognitive issues and patient masking.

**Revision 2:** Restrictions for in-person non-essential services have been amended. All deferred and non-essential services can be gradually restarted.

**Revisions 3:** Amendments on homemade masks and face shields, children and PPE, and use of gloves.

These Information sheets are intended to help audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to provide in-person patient care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The information sheets include three different types of information:

- 1) **Requirements** – Legislation, regulations and College standards
- 2) **Principles** – Information from various agencies
- 3) **Suggestions** – Ideas on how to proceed

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) protects health care workers from contracting the COVID-19 virus.

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Registrants must adhere to requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and its Regulations, and this applies to measures needed to protect workers from the risk of COVID-19. Employers, supervisors and workers have rights, duties and obligations under the OHSA. Specific requirements under the OHSA and its regulations are available at: [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)

- If the patient’s clinical or therapeutic needs were deferred or are non-essential consider providing assessment or treatment via virtual care [Directive 2 for Health Care Providers](#)
- Carry out a [Point of Care Risk Assessment](#) (Pandemic Practice Advisory 2) with every patient
- Carry out a [COVID-19 screen](#) (Pandemic Practice Advisory 3) with every patient

## PRINCIPLES:

This guidance is intended to inform minimum expectations for PPE; however, audiologists and SLPs should refer to and follow their own institutional or organizational infection prevention and control policies and procedures on PPE. Conserve PPE through its judicious use.

### [Public Health Ontario Technical Brief on the Use of PPE](#)

- If you are going to be closer than 6 feet to patients or visitors who screen negative for COVID-19 you must wear a surgical/procedure mask, a clear mask approved by Health Canada or a face shield. Consider wearing eye protection (unless wearing a face shield). Finally, you must conduct hand hygiene pre and post each patient interaction. The point of care risk assessment will determine what measures around PPE will be required ([Operational Requirements Health Sector Re-Start](#)).
- If deemed safe after performing a point of care risk assessment, Public Health Ontario allows face shields to be worn instead of masks for swallowing assessments and when patients need to see the health care professional’s face or mouth. Face shields come in various forms, but all provide a clear plastic barrier that covers the face. For optimal protection, the shield should extend below the chin anteriorly, to the ears laterally, and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield’s headpiece. **Ensuring that no part of the face is exposed is absolutely essential.** Don’t forget to clean the face shield after every patient visit following manufacturers’ recommendations.
- If you can maintain 6 feet physical distance between you and your patient or visitor for the entire assessment or treatment session, you don’t need to wear PPE (Public Health Ontario).
- Homemade masks and face shields should not be used by audiologists and SLP When providing in-person patient care. **NEW\***
- Patients and visitors should be masked and may wear their own masks (homemade, cloth or other).
- Hand hygiene is imperative before and after patient interactions.
- It is recommended that gloves be worn if you need to touch the patient’s mouth or oral cavity, or if the patient has COVID-19. Gloves are not a replacement for hand hygiene. Wash your hands before and after using gloves. **NEW\***
- Gloves and isolation gowns are not required for patients who **screen negative for Covid-19** ([Operational Requirements Health Sector Re-Start](#)). **NEW\***
- In the long-term care setting universal masking is required for all health care workers.

- Public Health Ontario, Technical Brief on the use of PPE.  
PPE [Requirements in Inpatient Facilities](#), page 5  
PPE [Requirements in Ambulatory and Outpatient Facilities](#), Page 7  
PPE [Requirements in Other Settings](#), Page 8

## Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Patients

If the appropriate PPE is **not** available, in-person patient services must be adapted or deferred.

If you are providing assessment or treatment to a patient who has or is suspected of having COVID-19 use Droplet and Contact Precautions, including:

- Surgical/procedure mask
- Isolation gown
- Gloves
- Eye protection (goggles or face shield)

If you are carrying out an [aerosol-generating medical procedure](#) (Technical Brief page 4) on suspect or confirmed COVID-19 patient, use Airborne, Droplet and Contact Precautions, including:

- N95 respirator (fit-tested, seal checked)
- Isolation gown
- Gloves
- Eye protection (goggles or face shield)
- Negative pressure room, if available

## PPE for Patients with Communication, Swallowing, Hearing and Cognitive Issues

Brands of clear masks have been authorized for importation and sale by Health Canada Medical Devices Directorate.

### [Government of Canada: COVID-19 and people with disabilities in Canada](#)

- If the patient has a diagnosis of COVID-19, then surgical/procedural masks must be worn by both the patient and the healthcare professional. The audiologist or SLP can wear masks with a transparent section to enable visualization of the mouth.
- For patients who do not have COVID-19, the audiologist or SLP can wear a clear face shield which covers to below the chin. In these situations, the longer the shield the better. The same should be done with the patient, if tolerated.
- If the person with a cognitive/intellectual disability is not able to wear a mask, regardless of COVID-19 status, then the audiologist or SLP should wear a mask and face shield and perform physical distancing as much as reasonably possible.

## PPE for Children

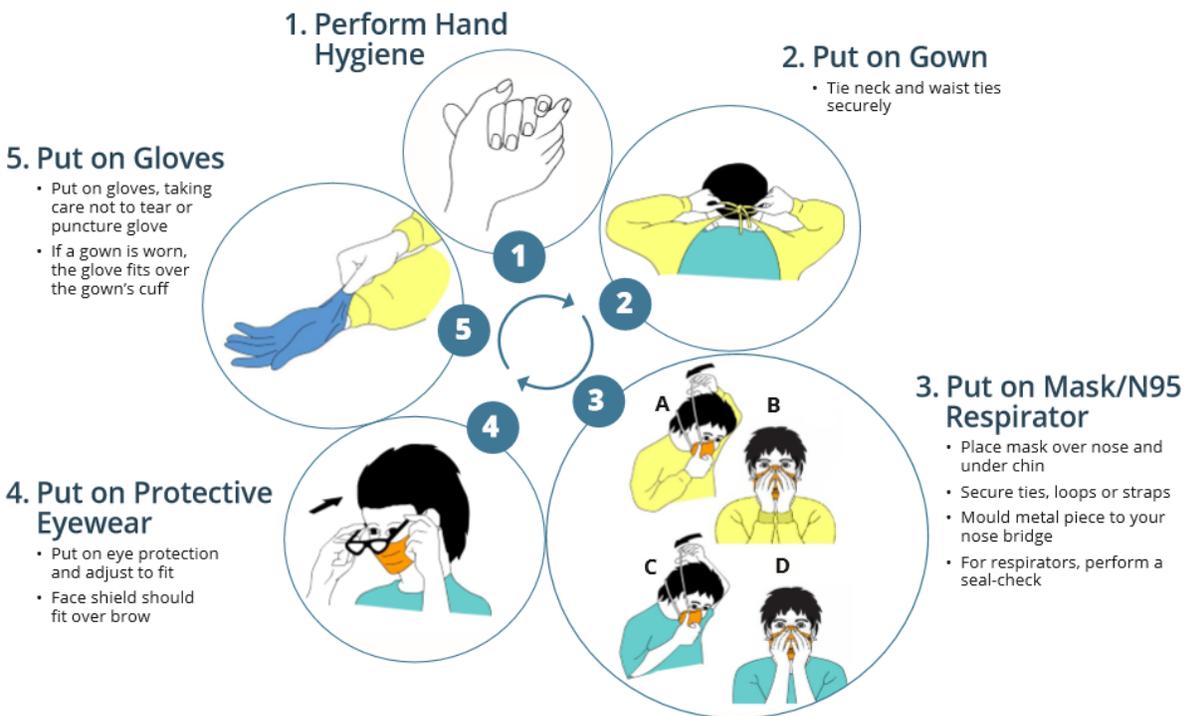
- The Ministry of Health is NOT requiring masks for toddlers or pre-school children while receiving audiology and SLP services. Masks are required for school-age children, but

only if tolerated by the child. It is expected that the child will remove their mask when the audiologist or SLP needs to see the child's face as part of the assessment or treatment process. **NEW**

Click this link for the Ministry's [Workplace PPE Supplier Directory](#)

Putting on and Removing PPE [Public Health Ontario](#)

### Recommended Steps: Putting On Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



For more information, please contact Public Health Ontario's Infection Prevention and Control Department at [ipac@oahpp.ca](mailto:ipac@oahpp.ca) or visit [www.publichealthontario.ca](http://www.publichealthontario.ca).

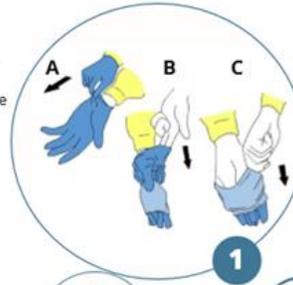


## Recommended Steps:

# Taking Off Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

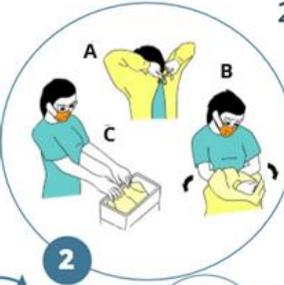
### 1. Remove Gloves

- Remove gloves using a glove-to-glove / skin-to-skin technique
- Grasp outside edge near the wrist and peel away, rolling the glove inside-out
- Reach under the second glove and peel away
- Discard immediately into waste receptacle



### 2. Remove Gown

- Remove gown in a manner that prevents contamination of clothing or skin
- Starting with waist ties, then neck ties, pull the gown forward from the neck ties and roll it so that the contaminated outside of the gown is to the inside. Roll off the arms into a bundle, then discarded immediately in a manner that minimizes air disturbance.



### 6. Perform Hand Hygiene

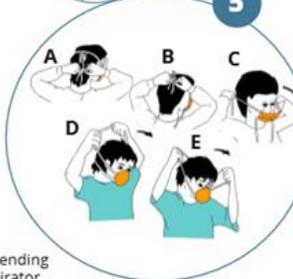


### 3. Perform Hand Hygiene



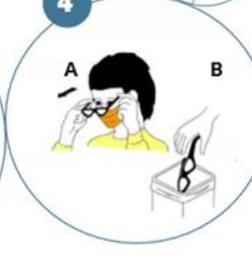
### 5. Remove Mask/ N95 Respirator

- Ties/ear loops/straps are considered 'clean' and may be touched with hands
- The front of the mask/respirator is considered to be contaminated
- Untie bottom tie then top tie, or grasp straps or ear loops
- Pull forward off the head, bending forward to allow mask/respirator to fall away from the face
- Discard immediately into waste receptacle



### 4. Remove Eye Protection

- Arms of goggles and headband of face shields are considered to be 'clean' and may be touched with the hands
- The front of goggles/face shield is considered to be contaminated
- Remove eye protection by handling ear loops, sides or back only
- Discard into waste receptacle or into appropriate container to be sent for reprocessing
- Personally-owned eyewear may be cleaned by the individual after each use



This is an excerpt from Routine Practices and Additional Precautions In All Health Care Settings (Appendix L) and was reformatted for ease of use.

## SUGGESTIONS:

- Plexiglass dividers that shield you and the patient may also be an appropriate option
- If it is essential that you see the patient's face and mouth, ask them to remove their mask for the activity and then put it on again for the rest of the session
- Ask patients to arrive at the clinic for their appointment wearing a mask. If you are going to initiate this policy, contact the patient before the visit outlining your masking requirements.
- Alternatively, consider providing your patient with a disposable mask on arrival to your clinic.
- Either of these masking strategies can apply to community visits
- Consider posting your masking requirements in the clinic waiting room and on your website. The public you serve will be assured that you are doing your part to keep them safe.
- Remove and wash work clothes that are exposed on returning home
- Consider gowns that will be doffed appropriately and washed

We cannot predict the consequences of the return to work, consequently further guidance may be added or changed. Also, as a self-regulated professional you must always use your professional judgement. The College's [Practice Advice team](#) is here to discuss issues with you.