

# Respiratory risk assessment and PPE guidance for healthcare workers

November 2023

Respiratory risk assessment for PPE requirements Consider risk assessment category below		Precautions required					
		Hand hygiene	Medical mask	P2/N95 particulate respirator <sup>3</sup>	Eye protection	Fluid resistant gown/ apron	Gloves
No acute respiratory infection or symptoms AND no recognised COVID-19 epidemiological risk <sup>1</sup>	<b>STANDARD PRECAUTIONS FOR ALL<sup>2</sup></b>	✓	✗ <sup>4</sup>	✗	As per standard precautions <sup>2</sup>	As per standard precautions <sup>2</sup>	As per standard precautions <sup>2</sup>
Acute Respiratory Infections		✓	✗	✓	✓ for close cares	As per standard precautions <sup>2</sup>	As per standard precautions <sup>2</sup>
Patient(s) with suspected or confirmed COVID-19  OR  Identified as a household contact		✓	✗	✓	✓	As per standard precautions <sup>2</sup>	As per standard precautions <sup>2</sup>

Adapted from NSW Clinical Excellence Commission – COVID-19 IPC manual (V 3.1 – 27 February 2023)

[https://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/644004/COVID-19-IPAC-manual.pdf](https://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/644004/COVID-19-IPAC-manual.pdf)

**Notes:**

1. COVID-19 contact history includes household contact or room contact in healthcare facility, that meets local definition.
2. Standard precautions always include a risk assessment for the need for further PPE.
3. HCW wearing P2/N95 respirators should be trained in correct use including seal checking, donning and safe removal.
4. In periods of higher prevalence (e.g. winter months/outbreaks/community surges), medical masks recommended for healthcare workers providing direct care in all environments with the healthcare facility. In undifferentiated admission area, a particulate respirator may be recommended by local policy.

For extended use, masks or respirators may be worn as per sessional use recommendations. Eye protection can also remain on between patients.

Masks/respirators should be changed if they become moist or contaminated with body fluids or after removal.

Wearing a mask is currently recommended for staff members providing clinical care. See [Personal protective equipment guidance for healthcare settings](#).