



# PPE when Administering Medicines during the Covid-19 Pandemic




Public Health England (PHE) has issued new guidance on the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be used for certain tasks during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## How does this guidance apply to medicines handling?

### Scenario 1

A task such as giving medicines which requires staff to be in direct contact with the person (e.g. touching) or within 2 metres of a person who is coughing.

The following PPE is recommended for **Care Homes** and **Domiciliary Care**:

Type of PPE	Recommended
Disposable gloves	 <b>Yes</b> - Single use to protect staff from contact with a person's body fluids and secretions.
Disposable plastic apron	 <b>Yes</b> - Single use to protect staff from contact with a person's body fluids and secretions.
Fluid repellent surgical mask (FRSM)	 <b>Yes</b> - A FRSM can be used continuously while providing care until staff take a break from duties.
Eye protection	<b>Risk Assessed</b> - Use of eye protection should be discussed with a manager and be informed by a documented risk assessment.  Eye protection can be used continuously while providing care until staff take a break from duties.



The only exception is for aerosol generating procedures such as open suctioning of airways/tracheostomies for which separate guidance applies (see PHE guidance: ‘COVID-19: personal protective equipment use for aerosol generating procedures’).

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

## Scenario 2

**A task requiring staff to be within 2 metres of the person but with no direct contact (i.e. no touching).**

The following PPE is recommended for **Care Homes**:

Type of PPE	Recommended
Disposable gloves	<b>✗ No</b> - Not required.
Disposable plastic apron	<b>✗ No</b> - Not required.
Surgical mask (or FRSM)	<p><b>✓ Yes</b>- A surgical mask can be used continuously while providing care until staff take a break from duties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fluid repellent surgical mask (FRSM) may be needed where there is high risk from respiratory droplets</li> <li>• Use of a FRSM should be discussed with a manager and be informed by a documented risk assessment.</li> </ul>
Eye protection	<p><b>Risk Assessed</b> - Use of eye protection should be discussed with a manager and be informed by a documented risk assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye protection can be used continuously while providing care until staff take a break from duties.</li> </ul>



### Scenario 3

A visit that does not require staff to touch the person being supported but requiring staff to be within 2 metres of the person e.g. removing medicines from their packaging or prompting people to take their medicines.

The following PPE is recommended for **Domiciliary Care**:

Type of PPE	Recommended	
Disposable gloves	✗	No - Not required.
Disposable plastic apron	✗	No - Not required.
Surgical mask (or FRSM)	✓	<p><b>Yes</b>- A surgical mask can be used continuously while providing care until staff take a break from duties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fluid repellent surgical mask (FRSM) may be needed where there is high risk from respiratory droplets</li> <li>• Use of a FRSM should be discussed with a manager and be informed by a documented risk assessment.</li> </ul>
Eye protection	✗	No - Not required.

If unable to maintain 2 metre distance from anyone who is coughing (including the person being supported) then follow recommendations in **Scenario 1**.

#### NOTE:

If practical, household members with respiratory symptoms should remain outside the room or rooms where the member of staff is working. They should be encouraged to follow good respiratory hygiene and remain 2 metres away.

**REMEMBER:**

PPE is only effective when combined with good hand hygiene, good respiratory hygiene (covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing and washing your hands immediately afterwards) and effective infection control practice.

**Good hand hygiene must be performed:**

- immediately before and after handling medicines as per usual, as well as before every episode of care
- after any activity or contact that potentially results in hands becoming contaminated e.g. removal of PPE, equipment decontamination and waste handling

**For the full guidance, see:****Care Homes and Residential Supported Living**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/881329/COVID-19\\_How\\_to\\_work\\_safely\\_in\\_care\\_homes.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/881329/COVID-19_How_to_work_safely_in_care_homes.pdf)

**Domiciliary Care, Extra Care Housing and Live-in homecare**

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

**NOTE:**

The information in this email refers to the handling of medicines. Make sure you are familiar with the PPE you need to use for all other aspects of care you undertake.