

Aerosol Generating Procedures and PPE

The current pandemic has highlighted the importance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in preventing the spread of infection. Government guidance supports the use of gloves, aprons, faces masks and eye protection in most care setting or when undertaking care in people's own homes, however in certain situations a higher level of protection is needed. This is the case when undertaking so called Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs).

The most up to date government guidance on PPE by healthcare setting can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

(Section 8.1 explains the full list of AGPs and PPE requirements)

Most AGPs will be undertaken in critical care settings such as intensive care facilities or other acute settings however some such as respiratory suction or tracheal procedures may be undertaken in care homes or in a person's own home. These procedures may have been undertaken routinely at home prior to the current pandemic with only minimal PPE. However if there is any concern that COVID-19 or any other respiratory infection may be present or when there is a period of sustained transmission of infection such as in the current COVID-19 pandemic then a higher level of PPE is required when undertaking AGPs including closer fitting face masks (FFP3) and long-sleeved gowns rather than plastic aprons.

FFP3 masks need to be properly Fit tested prior to their initial use and then fit checked prior to each subsequent use to ensure a proper seal so that the wearer is protected from the risk of inhaling aerosolised droplets while undertaking procedures such as suctioning. All FFP3 mask are single use and should be discarded appropriately after each use.

Further information on FFP3 masks can be found on page 38 of the link below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/893320/COVID-19_Infection_prevention_and_control_guidance_complete.pdf

Please note: FFP2 and N95 respirators can be used if FFP3 masks are not available-see guidance below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/updates-to-the-infection-prevention-and-control-guidance-for-covid-19>