

During the COVID-19 Pandemic:

HOME CARE TASKS, EXPOSURE RISK, AND RECOMMENDED PPE

Healthcare workers should always use protective barriers to protect themselves from exposure to another person's blood or body fluid¹:

- Always wear gloves when touching surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids.
- A mask, goggles, and face shield help protect your eyes and nose. Always wear them when doing an activity that may expose you to infectious airborne particles, splashes or sprays of blood or body fluid.
- Gowns or aprons protect you from sprays or splashes of blood or body fluid.



The four exposure risk levels represent probable distribution of risk (OSHA²)

COVID-19 positive client, household member or person under investigation

Risk Level	Exposure	Tasks or Activities	Recommended PPE
Very high	Aerosol generating activities – client on oxygen, nebulizer; high aerosol and droplet exposures: being close to client's mouth, breathing, sneezing, coughing, talking	Conducting a visit in the home → Personal care with client using oxygen or nebulizer or inhaled medications; bathing, tooth/denture brushing, toileting, dressing, feeding, transferring, ambulating	<p>Before entering the home, don the following PPE:</p> <p>N95 respirator* Goggles or safety glasses Face shield Gloves Gown</p>
High	Exposure to aerosols in indoor air and to contaminated surfaces, including blood and body fluids	Conducting a visit in the home → Laundry of sick client Cleaning bathroom and kitchen Changing linens Cleaning other high touch surfaces	
Medium	-	-	
Lower	-	-	

Non-COVID-19 client or household member

Risk Level	Exposure	Tasks or Activities	Recommended PPE
Very high	-	-	
High	Exposure to blood and body fluids	Personal care (bathing, toileting, dressing, transferring, ambulating) →	Surgical mask** Goggles or safety glasses
Medium	Surface contamination from blood and body fluids	Cleaning bathroom → Changing linens and doing laundry →	Gloves Gown
Lower		Light house cleaning →	Gloves

* Use of an N95 respirator requires a safety process known as Fit Testing. Fit Testing assures that the respirator provides the intended protection. For more information about fit testing: <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2020/04/01/fit-testing-during-outbreaks/>

** A surgical mask is recommended to help protect the client in case an aide is asymptomatic but infectious.

¹ Body fluids include mucus or moisture from nose or lungs, saliva or spittle, blood, stool, sweat, tears, vomit, urine

² Worker Exposure Risk to COVID-19. <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3993.pdf>

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