# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for taking COVID-19 naso/oropharyngeal swabs

This guidance is based on Infection Prevention and Control best practice with regards to Standard and Transmission Based Precautions.¹

The wearing of PPE is to mitigate any infectious risk posed to the healthcare worker when collecting a naso/oropharyngeal swab from people who meet either or both of the Clinical and Higher Index of Suspicion (HIS) criteria for COVID-19.² Close contact is required and the person may cough and/or sneeze during taking of the swab or upon removal of the swab.

### General advice:

- Stand slightly to the side of the patient when taking the swab, not directly in front of them
- Move away when the procedure is completed
- Patients should be provided with tissues to contain coughs and sneezes throughout the procedure

### If collecting a series of swabs (e.g. CBACs, testing clinics, sessional setting):

- Change your gloves and perform hand hygiene between each patient
- A surgical mask can be worn for the duration of the session, or until the mask becomes damp or soiled
- Eye protection and an apron/gown can be worn for the duration of the session, as long as they are not damaged or visibly contaminated

### PPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always perform hand hygiene when putting on and taking off PPE³</th>
<th>Use alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or wash your hands with soap and water and dry hands thoroughly. Perform hand hygiene according to the WHO ‘5 moments for hand hygiene’⁴</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surgical Mask</strong></td>
<td>To prevent exposure of the nose and mouth mucosa for all interactions with a known or suspected infectious patient.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eye protection</strong></td>
<td>To provide an additional layer of protection against exposure to the COVID-19 virus through the conjunctiva of the eye use a face shield or goggles. Prescription glasses are not classed as eye protection.¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plastic apron or long sleeve fluid-resistant gown⁵</strong></td>
<td>To protect skin and prevent soiling of clothing when the health care worker is in contact with the patient or immediate environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-sterile Gloves</strong></td>
<td>Gloves should be worn because of potential exposure to respiratory secretions. Hand hygiene should be performed before putting on and after taking off gloves.</td>
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</tbody>
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⁴ [www.handhygiene.org.nz](http://www.handhygiene.org.nz)
⁵ Note: When collecting a swab from someone who does not meet either the Clinical or the HIS criteria for COVID-19, a plastic apron or fluid-resistant long sleeve gown is optional, based on a risk assessment of potential exposure to respiratory secretions.