Personal protective equipment (PPE) for the collection of specimens - COVID-19 naso/oropharyngeal or nasal swabs (RAT or PCR) during Omicron outbreak

4 March 2022

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 infectious risk posed to the healthcare worker during close proximity when collecting a nasopharyngeal, oropharyngeal or nasal swab for PCR or RAT. Guidance is also provided for when supervising or distributing a RAT.

Always perform hand hygiene when donning, doffing and disposal of PPE\(^2\). Sessional use of PPE is recommended where possible (see further below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action/What/Where</th>
<th>PPE</th>
<th>General advice</th>
<th>Sessional use of PPE(^3)</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Undertaking multiple PCR or RAT tests - outdoor areas. | - Medical mask  
- Eye protection  
- Gown  
- Gloves                                                            | - Use a well ventilated space  
- Stand slightly to the side of the patient (not directly in front of them) when taking the swab  
- Advise person to pull mask down to just under their nose  
- Take swab  
- Move away when the procedure is completed  
- Advise person to pull mask back up to cover nose | Medical masks, P2/N95 particulate respirators, eye protection\(^4\) and gowns can be worn for the duration of a session – change if damp, contaminated or more than 4 hours use. |
| Undertaking PCR or RAT tests – indoor, close confined space | - P2/N95 particulate respirator  
- Eye protection  
- Gown  
- Gloves                                                          |                                                                               | Gloves – these must be changed between each person encounter and hand hygiene performed before donning new gloves. |

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1 See information on Standard and Transmission-based Precautions: Infection prevention and control

2 See donning and doffing guidance: COVID-19: Infection prevention and control recommendations for health and disability care worker

3 See information on sessional use: COVID-19: Infection prevention and control recommendations for health and disability care worker

4 Face shield, safety glasses or goggles (can be re-processed and reused) – prescription glasses are not classed as eye protection
| Supervising a person undertaking a self-test with a RAT - **outdoor areas** | - Medical mask  
- Eye protection  
- Hand hygiene | - Maintain at least 1 m physical distance from person and use well ventilated space where possible. |
|---|---|---|
| Supervising a person undertaking a self-test with a RAT - **indoor, close confined space** | - P2/N95 particulate respirator  
- Eye protection  
- Hand hygiene | - Maintain at least 1 m physical distance from person |
| Distributing RAT kits | - Medical mask  
- Eye protection (optional)  
- Hand hygiene | - Maintain at least 1m physical distance from person |