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**Title:** PICNet guidance on personal protective equipment (PPE) for nasopharyngeal and throat swabs

**From:** PICNet

**To:** IPAC Medical and Operational leadership, Workplace Health, BCCDC

In alignment and follow up to previous messages from BCCDC and to promote consistency when caring for patients under investigation for 2019-nCoV, we continue to recommend that, at minimum, patient care be under droplet (including eye protection) and contact precautions, and when performing aerosol generating medical procedures use airborne precautions.

### **N95 respirator and nasopharyngeal and throat swabs**

NP and throat swabs can be performed using contact and droplet precautions with surgical mask and eye protection, and do not require the use of an N95 respirator. Institutions may choose to use an N95 respirator based on risk assessment of the patient and/or ease of PPE instructions for sample collection.

N95 respirator and eye protection (i.e. goggles or face shield) should be donned for specimen collection (or other procedures) that are aerosol generating medical procedures (i.e. open suctioning of respiratory tract, intubation, bronchoscopy, cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

This guidance is derived from a review of literature and discussions with medical microbiologists and infection control experts.

### **Key reminders for healthcare workers:**

When providing care for patients under investigation for 2019 nCoV,

Apply routine infection prevention and control practices for respiratory pathogens, especially:

- place patients with acute respiratory illness/pneumonia on appropriate additional precautions:
  - Place the patient in single-occupancy if possible
  - Provide the patient with a surgical mask
  - Place the patient under contact and droplet precautions and ensure the use of face and eye protection (i.e. goggles or face shield) while providing patient care and during specimen collection.
  - N95 respirator and eye protection (i.e. goggles or face shield) should be donned for specimen collection (or other procedures) that are aerosol generating medical procedures (i.e. open suctioning of respiratory tract, intubation, bronchoscopy, cardiopulmonary resuscitation).
- Practice fastidious hand hygiene
- Practice cough etiquette; cover nose and mouth during coughing or sneezing with tissue or elbow
- Extreme care should be used when doffing/removing PPE

This message was adapted from:

World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>,

[https://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus\\_infections/IPCNCoVguidance\\_06May13.pdf](https://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus_infections/IPCNCoVguidance_06May13.pdf) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/healthcaresettings.htm>,

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/transmission-based-precautions.html>