

HOME VISIT PPE FULL PROCEDURE FOR PATIENTS WITH RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES

Brian Kerley, MD; Denise Marshall, MD; Lana Tan, MD (Co-Authors)

Preamble:

This procedure is intended to allow a health care worker to make a safe home visit to a patient with respiratory symptoms who may or may not have Covid-19. It is not intended to be a protocol for visits to lower risk patients (situations where the patient and everyone in their home pass screening). In lower risk situations, the provider is advised to consider what degree and amount of PPE to use. This may vary according to local protocol and availability of the various elements of PPE. It is also assumed that the provider knows how to correctly don PPE.

Procedure:

1. As much as possible, prepare for the visit with a virtual visit or telephone call prior to going to the home. Do your history taking and as much discussion as you can over the phone or video, so that only a physical exam will take place in the home. Try to ensure that a family member will be in the home and will be able to help you exit the home safely afterwards.
2. Ask the family to put a large garbage bin lined with a garbage bag just inside the front door.
3. If they have a surgical mask, ask them to put it on the patient when you arrive.
4. If they have hand sanitizer, ask them to have the patient do hand hygiene when you arrive.
5. Print 2 copies of the DOFFING PPE CUE SHEET, one for outside the door, one for inside the door.
6. Bring with you a container of ABHRⁱ, a container of viral wipes, a green garbage bag, a small plastic grocery bag (for carrying everything into the house) and 2 empty pails, one labelled CLEAN and one DIRTY (a lid for the dirty pail would ideal), an extra earloop mask for the patient in case they don't have one, and the 2 copies of the DOFFING PPE CUE SHEET.
7. Don PPEⁱⁱ outside the home, leave the empty pails outside the door with lid(s) off, put one of the cue sheets on the ground next to the pails, secured so it doesn't blow away, and enter the home carrying the grocery bag containing the green garbage bag, viral wipes, ABHR, the spare mask and your equipment. Put the unopened garbage bag flat on the floor next to the garbage bin, and put the viral wipes, the ABHR and the second copy of the DOFFING PPE CUE SHEET on it. Discard the grocery bag into the garbage bin.
8. Ask the patient to put on the earloop mask and do hand hygiene with their own ABHR if they have not already done so, but do NOT offer your own ABHR for this purpose.
9. Perform the physical exam.
10. With full PPE still on, move to the front door and perform hand hygiene on your gloves with the ABHR (remember, you have now contaminated the ABHR container).
11. With a viral wipe, clean the inside door handle. After a minute, repeat with a second wipe.
12. Touching only the clean door handle, open the door, then with a viral wipe, clean your stethoscope and any other equipment such as a pulse oximeter, the ABHR bottle and then the viral wipe container, one at a time, in that order, and after cleaning each item, drop it in the clean bucket outside the door, touching only the cleaned door handle. Keep the ABHR accessible, you will need it several more times.
13. Doff gown and gloves inside the front door and put in the big garbage can. Don't push down.
14. Exit the house leaving behind the DOFFING PPE CUE SHEET and the flat garbage bag on the floor. Touch only the cleaned door handle.
15. Hand hygiene with ABHR.
16. If wearing goggles and separate mask, remove goggles by touching only the most posterior parts of the arms, and place in the DIRTY empty bucket.

17. Remove your mask touching only the back of the earloops, and hand it back in the house for someone to put in the garbage (don't touch the door), or if no assistant is available, put it in an outside garbage can if there is one—if not, in the DIRTY bucket with the goggles.
18. Hand hygiene with ABHR
19. Put the lid on the dirty bucket. Don't touch the goggles or mask. Leave the outdoor copy of the DOFFING PPE CUE SHEET behind. Pack your car.
20. At home, with fresh vinyl exam gloves on, wipe all your equipment a second time
21. With gloves still on, remove mask from DIRTY bucket if you placed it there in step 17, and put it in the garbage. Put dishsoap and water carefully in the DIRTY bucket so as not to splash, wash goggles, rinse with water then place in 10% bleach solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts water) to soak.
22. Wash out the bucket thoroughly then viral wipe it.
23. Remove vinyl exam gloves and do hand hygiene with ABHR.

Notes:

- a. You could consider bins lined with garbage bags instead of buckets, but you would need to exercise caution in tying and untying the bags so as not to aerosolize virus with a puff of air as you gather the bag. You would need to have gloves on for closing and opening the bags and it would require hand hygiene after each step.
- b. You may need to modify your exit procedure, particularly step 12, depending on the configuration of the front door or doors of the house. This is where assistance from a family member is valuable.
- c. You may need to modify this procedure if you need to do multiple visits without returning to home or office in between. You will need several sets of PPE (one for each visit) and you will need to give your equipment a second wipe before the next visit (two wipes at least a few minutes apart are recommended). This will also require vinyl exam gloves (so you will need to bring those with you in the car) and hand hygiene afterwards. If supplies of PPE are limited, it may be possible to use the same mask and eye protection for several successive visits, provided you do not touch either item while you are not wearing gloves, and provided that you can safely drive your car with both items on. Once they are removed, there is a risk of contaminating the skin when they are re-applied, so once removed they should be discarded or reprocessed as appropriate.

References:

1. NETC Hand Hygiene and PPE video: <https://youtu.be/bG6zISnenPg>
2. The CDC Donning and Doffing PPE protocol
3. The Ontario Public Health Donning and Doffing PPE protocol
4. The HHS donning and doffing PPE protocol
5. Public Health Canada for reprocessing eyewear: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/interim-guidance-cases-contacts.html>
6. OMA PPE recommendations: http://fhs.mcmaster.ca/palliativecare/documents/OMAPPE_Recommendations_FINAL.pdf
7. IPAC document: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/updated-ipac-measures-covid-19.pdf?la=en>

ⁱ ABHR=Alcohol based hand rub, which must be at least 60% ethanol.

ⁱⁱ PPE = Personal Protective Equipment, and in this instance will include an impervious gown, a mask (a surgical mask will suffice, unless there will be aerosol generating procedures in the home such as suctioning of secretions, CPAP, BIPAP or high flow oxygen, in which case an N95 respirator is needed), eye protection (goggles, visor, or a mask with an integrated visor) and gloves.

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