

# Tips for Wearing PPE with Religious and Cultural Attire

**Note:** Terms in bold are defined in the **Definitions** section.

If you have any questions or comments contact IPC at [ipcsurvstdadmin@ahs.ca](mailto:ipcsurvstdadmin@ahs.ca).

## Best practice recommendations

### Purpose

- To outline considerations for healthcare workers wearing eye protection and/or procedure masks (ear loops)/surgical masks (ties at the back of head), or N95 respirators, and maintaining/respecting religious head wear or attire, e.g., **turban**, **kippah**, **hijab**, **niqab**, **kapp**, or **head scarf**.

### Application

This recommendation should be followed by all AHS staff, medical staff, midwives, volunteers, students and other persons acting on behalf of AHS.

#### 1. Continuous masking

- 1.1 Is required in all zones in accordance with [Directive: Use of Masks During COVID-19](#), and all AHS or subsidiary facilities (clinical and corporate). For more details, including an AHS Directive and guidelines, refer to [COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#) or [Continuous Masking and Patient Care](#).

**Note:** Covenant Health staff follow [Use of Masks During COVID-19.pdf \(compassionnet.ca\)](#).

- 1.2 When continuous masking is not in place, wear masks according to [point of care risk assessment](#), additional precautions in place ([isolation pocket reference](#)) and [resource manual](#) for specific disease conditions.
- 1.3 Follow [donning](#) and [doffing](#) posters for detailed PPE steps, including hand hygiene.
- 1.4 For specific questions (not addressed in this information sheet) about how to wear masks and religious head coverings, contact the WHS Advisor in your zone.

#### 2. A face shield is the preferred eye protection to wear with religious attire.

#### 3. Wearing procedure/surgical masks or N95 respirators with religious attire

- 3.1 Determine which procedure/surgical mask is appropriate for use with religious attire.
  - a) Procedure mask can be donned using ear loops under religious attire (refer to Figure 1); **or**
  - b) A mask extender or surgical mask can be donned over religious attire. (refer to Figure 2).
  - c) If using a mask extender, find an angle that does not pull the mask too far up or down.
  - d) Refer to [Tips on the Use of Mask Extenders](#) for details.

Figure 1



Figure 2



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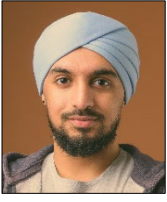
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- 3.2 Perform N95 respirator fit testing with head covering in place to ensure the wearer can get an effective fit/seal. The N95 must be secured over the head cover.
- a) When a niqāb is worn, decide if the mask is sufficient face covering or if the niqāb will be worn over the mask.
  - b) If a niqāb is worn over the mask:
    - Have a supply of additional niqāb to change as needed.
    - When leaving a room on additional precautions:
      - Doff any additional personal protective equipment (PPE) at the designated doffing area, except for procedure/surgical mask or N95 respirator under niqāb.
      - In a convenient private change space and immediately before any other tasks:
        - Remove the niqāb;
        - Doff procedure/surgical mask or N95 respirator.
- 3.3 When to change procedure/surgical mask, N95 respirator, religious attire and face shield:
- a) Procedure/surgical mask or N95 respirator is changed if wet, soiled or contaminated, e.g., Aerosol Generated Medical Procedure (AGMP) exposure, after leaving an additional precautions room, being cough or sneezed on, and before breaks and shift change.
  - b) Perform a risk assessment and change religious attire anytime contamination by splashing/sprays/touching is suspected.
  - c) If continuous eye protection is worn, change face shield when wet, soiled or contaminated and when leaving a room on additional precautions requiring masking.
  - d) If procedure/surgical mask, N95 respirator or face shield becomes contaminated, change as a unit with religious attire.
  - e) Refer to [IPC PPE Table for Emergency Department and Urgent Care Centres during COVID-19](#) for more details about when to change mask and PPE.

### 4. Laundering head coverings

- 4.1 Launder head and face coverings regularly e.g., daily. Refer to [IPC's Healthcare Attire \(Scrubs and Uniforms\) Information Sheet](#) for details.

## Definitions

<p><b>Head scarf</b> is a scarf covering most or all the top of the hair and head leaving the face uncovered.</p>		
	<p><b>Hijab</b></p>	<p><b>Hijab</b> refers to head coverings worn by some Muslim women.</p>
	<p><b>Kapp</b></p>	<p><b>Kapp</b> is a Christian head covering worn by many women, e.g., Mennonites, and Amish women.</p>
	<p><b>Kippah</b></p>	<p><b>Kippah</b> (also called yarmulke, or Koppel) is a brimless cap, usually made of cloth, traditionally worn by Jewish men to fulfill the customary requirement that the head be covered.</p>
	<p><b>Niqāb</b></p>	<p><b>Niqāb</b> is a garment that covers the face worn by some Muslim women as a part of an interpretation of hijab, i.e., "modest dress".</p>
	<p><b>Turban</b></p>	<p><b>Turban</b> refers to a type of headwear based on cloth winding. Featuring many variations, it is worn as customary headwear by people of various cultures, e.g., dastār (Sikh turban).</p>

## References

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3. Juergensmeyer M, Adetunji SA. Safety in Chemical and Biomedical Laboratories: Guidelines for the Use of Head Covers by Female Muslim Scientists. Appl Biosaf. 2022;27(1):1-6. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/36032321>.



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