

# Staff Tips: COVID-19 Personal Clothing and Cleaning Surfaces

**Note:** These tips are based on work initiated by Dr. Jim Kellner and the Pediatrics Infectious Disease group to answer questions about wearing clothing home and hard surfaces cleaning.

If department policies and emerging public health directives vary from the general recommendations provided in this guideline, refer to, and follow those policies and directives. If you have any questions or comments regarding this information sheet please contact [ipcsurvstdadmin@ahs.ca](mailto:ipcsurvstdadmin@ahs.ca)

## 1. Personal clothing

- 1.1 Personal protective equipment (PPE), i.e., gowns are worn to protect clothing from contamination. By protecting yourself and using your PPE properly at work, you're also protecting your family members and loved ones. For more information refer to:
  - AHS [Dedicated Page](#) for PPE. Information developed by a PPE task force is found at this [information and supports link](#).
  - COVID-19 [Scientific Advisory Group Rapid Response Report](#).
  - AHS Briefing on [Personal Items and Clothing](#).
  - AHS WHS COVID-19 [FAQ for Staff](#).
- 1.2 AHS issued scrubs are supplied to areas where they are clinically necessary, e.g., to staff on COVID-19 designated units who provide direct patient care and to other areas where required by departmental policy. For more information refer to the [Healthcare Attire Information Sheet](#). PPE is still required.
- 1.3 Information on hand hygiene is available online, refer to link to [Education](#) including an alcohol-based hand rub [\(ABHR\) video](#).
- 1.4 Hair and shoe coverings are not required PPE. If hair coverings are worn for personal reasons; launder as per the [Healthcare Attire Information Sheet](#).
- 1.5 Do not access items such as cell phones from pockets while wearing PPE as this undermines the purpose of the PPE.
- 1.6 Staff showering and bathing practices are not considered important IPC measures for COVID-19 and staff are advised to follow their usual personal hygiene practices.
- 1.7 In addition to the above IPC recommendations [Social Distancing](#) is being implemented in work spaces to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 at AHS.
- 1.8 Additional tips:
  - Washable clothing is preferred in the healthcare setting. Regularly launder clothing in a hot water wash cycle followed by a cycle in the dryer. For more information refer to the [Healthcare Attire Information Sheet](#).
    - Avoid wearing dry-cleanable or hand-washable clothes to work.
  - Minimize contact between unprotected clothing, i.e., PPE/gown not worn, and the patient environment, e.g., do not lean up against walls, countertops, furniture, patient beds/cribs, or medical equipment.
  - Change your clothes at the end of a clinical day, either at the hospital or other facility, or once you arrive at home.

## Staff Tips: COVID-19 Personal Clothing and Cleaning Surfaces | 2

- If you change at work, transport the clothes you have changed out of, in either a disposable plastic bag or a washable cloth bag that can be laundered at the same time as the clothes.

### 2. Is it a PPE breach if my clothes become contaminated at work?

2.1 Soiled clothing is not considered a PPE breach unless blood and body fluid penetrates the PPE onto your skin. Change soiled clothing before leaving work.

2.2 A PPE breach occurs when:

- Recommended PPE has not been worn, resulting in exposure to COVID-19 or
- PPE worn has not prevented a blood or body fluid exposure, e.g., splashes or sprays of blood or body fluid into eyes or mucous membranes despite use of mask and eye shield, or the penetration of the skin through gloves by a sharps injury, e.g., needlestick.
  - If a PPE breach occurs, notify [WHS immediately](#) and follow [BBF exposure protocol](#). Call WHS at 1-855-450-3619 or use this [link](#) for Zone specific contact information.
  - If a small patch of intact skin is accidentally exposed, either wash the area with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) and notify WHS. Call WHS at 1-855-450-3619 or use this [link](#) for Zone specific contact information.

### 3. Cleaning surfaces

3.1 Clean and disinfect medical and personal accessories with [Ready-to-use Disinfectant Wipes](#) which effectively kill the COVID-19 virus. For example:

- Reusable stethoscopes should be cleaned and disinfected between patients. Refer to the [IPC Information Sheet on Stethoscopes for Patients on Contact and Droplet Precautions \(COVID-19\)](#).
- Personal accessories such as nametags should be cleaned if soiled or in contact with the patient environment.
- Pagers, cell phones and other electronic devices:
  - Do not take into the patient environment unless necessary for patient care.
  - If the device is taken into the patient environment; [Clean and Disinfect](#) the device before entering the room and when leaving the room.

### 4. Cleaning at home

4.1 Any of the following household products are effective for cleaning hard surfaces at home when used according to label instructions:

- **Household bleach:** Refer to this Environmental Public Health [Environmental Public Health](#) document for more details about dilution, high touch surfaces, e.g., tabletops, light switches, door knobs, sink taps, toilet handles, counter tops etc. and cleaning technique.
- Commercial benzalkonium chloride, e.g., Lysol™, and other antibacterial products;

## Staff Tips: COVID-19 Personal Clothing and Cleaning Surfaces | 3

- Hydrogen peroxide;
- >70% alcohol;
- Refer to the Government of Canada web site "Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers (COVID-19)" [List of Hard-surface Disinfectants](#) to check if a specific disinfectant is listed.

### 5. Additional resources

**AHS IPC** [Stethoscope Use for Patients on Contact and Droplet Precautions including COVID-19 Patients.](#)