

Personal protective equipment (PPE): guidance for NGO community workers



This resource is for people in non-government organisations (NGOs) who support people in their homes and:

- ✓ have been advised to use personal protective equipment (PPE) by their employer
- ✓ want to know how to use it properly.

What is PPE?

PPE refers to equipment such as masks, gowns, eye protection and gloves. PPE is used to minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19. PPE is effective when it's:

1. used in the right context
2. used together with effective hygiene
3. put on properly
4. taken off and disposed of properly.



When should NGO staff visiting people in their homes use PPE?

Check your organisation's guidelines. The Ministry of Health has advice on PPE needed by health workers in different situations. Check their [website](#) as this will be reviewed regularly. Not everyone needs to wear a face mask or PPE for every interaction with people – it depends on the context.

Letting people you support know about PPE

Some people you support may feel scared or anxious when they see you wearing PPE. To help lessen these feelings, be open about what PPE is and why you are using it – to keep each other safe. Discuss this with the person you are supporting before your visit. If it's not possible to speak to the person first, you may like to leave the PPE in a clean bag in your car and greet the person you support first, from a 2-metre distance. You can then go back to your car, sanitise your hands, and put on your PPE.



The importance of effective hygiene

PPE works best when used together with effective hygiene practices:

- ✓ if you are sick, **stay at home**
- ✓ [wash your hands thoroughly](#) and regularly, or use sanitiser (60 per cent alcohol-based) if soap is not available
- ✓ where possible, keep your distance from other people
- ✓ do not touch your nose, eyes and mouth with unwashed hands
- ✓ cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow.