

PPE for Assisting Patients to Shower or Bath

Note: If you have any questions or comments contact IPC at ipcsurvstdadmin@ahs.ca.

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Best practice recommendations

Showering or tub bathing may create splashes and sprays of water and the possibility of exposure to body fluids/secretions from the patient with the water splash. Use a point of care risk assessment to determine if you need to wear personal protective equipment (PPE).

1. Selecting PPE

1.1 [Routine practices](#), used when interacting with all patients at all times, includes a [point of care risk assessment](#) to guide selection and use of PPE.

- If you may be splashed or sprayed while assisting with the shower or tub bath, wear a water-resistant or waterproof gown, gloves and facial protection e.g., surgical/procedure mask with visor or goggles.
- To reduce the risk of splashing, place items needed during the shower or bath, e.g., soap, face cloth, shampoo in a location within reach of the patient to use without help.
- Discard single-use, disposable PPE after use. Exception: eye protection such as goggles, safety glasses and face shields may be dedicated to an individual healthcare provider and [cleaned and disinfected for reuse](#).
- Clean and disinfect reusable PPE after use, e.g., gowns can be stored or hung in a clean location.

1.2 Rubber boots are not PPE but may be necessary to keep shoes and feet dry.

- Rubber boots may be dedicated to a single staff member or may be reused between staff. To prevent direct contact of feet with the inside of the boot:
 - If boots are dedicated to a single staff member, staff wear socks to cover feet.
 - If boots are reused by more than one staff member, staff wear socks and shoe covers over feet.
- Clean and disinfect the exterior of the rubber boots after use and store for reuse.

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2. Supplies required

- 2.1 The site/facility provides supplies in various sizes if the patient needs direct staff assistance with showering or tub bathing:
- Single-use disposable or reusable water-resistant or waterproof gowns that cover the front and sides of the staff member to prevent splashes penetrating onto clothes and skin.
 - Determine if the reusable gowns will be dedicated to a single staff member or reused between staff as this impacts supply quantity.
 - Rubber boots:
 - Determine if the boots will be dedicated to a single staff member or reused between staff members as this impacts supply quantity.
 - Use disposable shoe covers if rubber boots are not dedicated to a single staff member.

3. Patients on additional precautions e.g., COVID-19

- 3.1 Depending on the setting, consider alternative bathing methods such as bed-baths, e.g., bath-in-a-bag system for symptomatic patients.

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