



This Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Bulletin has been created to provide ongoing direction to healthcare providers regarding the recommended guidelines, processes and provincial supply of PPE.

Solutions for complications with extended PPE use

PPE accommodations for allergies and skin sensitivities:

Staff and physicians who have not previously worn masks for extended periods of time are now doing so as a result of continuous masking guidelines. The continual use of a mask can understandably be uncomfortable as one gets used to this additional level of protection. You may find that at first the smell of a mask is causing you problems when you first start wearing it or that your ears become sore. However, some individuals may find that the extended use of PPE is causing a more serious problem and may be experiencing reactions with their skin. Others may find that they are experiencing skin sensitivities to hand sanitizer.

Supply Chain and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) have a process to help staff and physicians who are experiencing issues with the type of PPE available to them. By following this process Supply Chain can assist with finding you a new product and the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) can better understand if an issue with a product is more widespread.

Steps to follow:

- If you are experiencing a problem or issue with a product, first issue an incident report with your local OHS.
- After you have logged an incident report, fill out a Product Issue Report Form.
 - [A copy of the form](#) can be found on the SHA intranet site or by contacting your local Materials Management/Supply Chain department.
- Send the completed form to your Materials Management/Supply Chain department.
- Materials Management/Supply Chain will work with you to find an alternate product.

When you submit a product issue form the issue is investigated by a designated Materials Management/Supply Chain staff member and logged into the 3sHealth Product Issue Log. This log is accessible to the Materials Management/Supply Chain departments provincially and allows them to have a fuller picture of products that are causing issues, lot numbers of affected products, common issues provincially, trending and resolution to issues.

Skin integrity and masking:

Extended use of masks can lead to concerns about skin integrity. Wearing a mask for the duration of the day can leave some with pressure injuries, contact dermatitis, itching or hives related to pressure. Even small skin irritation may cause many to inadvertently touch their face and break PPE protocol unconsciously. The use of barrier creams/lotions/products can go a long way to support continuous mask wearing and to prevent poor skin disorders from developing.

Some things you can do to help protect your skin are as follows:

- Regularly inspect the skin and reposition the PPE for pressure relief at least every 4 hours.





- Use a skin barrier film protectant to protect contact areas when using face masks and allow to dry thoroughly as to not interfere with PPE efficacy.
- Assess all contact areas between the PPE and the skin.
- Use a pressure reduction product, ensuring that the face mask fits snugly and correctly against the skin.
- If your mask is wet or damaged, it must be changed immediately.
- Regularly check that the seal of the PPE is intact with your skin.
- After removal of the face mask, clean and moisturize the skin.

All Supply Chain stores are adding the following products to their inventories and will be available for employees and physicians by next week:

- Moisturizer and barrier cream
- Liquid skin protectant
- Skin protectant
- Barrier cream cloths.

Ear protectors are available:

Thanks to the innovations brought forward through SHA Ideas, the SHA has ear protectors that have been 3D printed right here in Saskatchewan, as well as others that have been sourced by Supply Chain. These ear protectors are available for staff to use with their procedure masks to help with one of the major complaints of continuous use, sore ears. The 3D printed ear protectors can be easily wiped down and when worn properly, can help to alleviate pressure on the ears. Please read this [Rapid Update on proper wear of ear protectors](#) for more information.

If you have made your own ear protectors, you are also able to wear them, as long as they position your mask in the right place and can be laundered with your uniform after every shift or cleaned with a disinfectant wipe.

Do you have an idea on how to help address COVID-19? Please join the many people already contributing at [SHA ideas](#). Your great idea could be the next one to help in the fight against COVID-19.

Questions and Answers:

1. **If a patient or visitor comes into an SHA facility wearing a cloth mask, should they be doffing it to don a procedure mask?**

The SHA will provide everyone who is required to mask with a medical grade mask. While cloth masks have been recommended for public use, all those in SHA facilities are to wear medical grade masks to ensure a high level of protection. Refer to the PPE rapid update on [who should be masked](#) for more information.





Please share this poster on [correct face mask wear](#) (found in the poster section) for patients, resident and visitors in your facility to help the public understand how to properly don and doff a face mask.

2. Are gloves to be worn continuously, for example, while portering a patient?

No, gloves used in healthcare are defined as ***single-use disposable gloves*** and are used during medical procedures or provision of care. Once you have used them for the intended single-use, dispose of them properly. The [Rapid Update, Gloves are not continuous use](#) can help to clarify how gloves should be worn in a health care setting.

3. Should I be wearing extra PPE items like a hair cover or shoe covers? More is better right?

Based on best practice and clinical evidence, there is **no additional benefit** with respect to reducing disease transmission beyond standard infection control practices already in place. Adding additional pieces of PPE beyond those recommended may result in harm by increasing risk of self-contamination during the doffing process. The [Rapid Update on extra PPE](#) provides more information on what is considered to be the recommended PPE use and reasons for not wearing additional PPE.