

HOW: Teaching the Donning and Doffing of PPE¹

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Tips on Donning and Doffing PPE:

- Don't interrupt and don't allow any interruptions during a donning or doffing process. Concentration matters.
- Take your time. Go slow. Don't remove PPE quickly. We worry about spread and aerosolizing
- Careful when reaching for neck ties or velcro while doffing:
 - Keep chin up to avoid contact of your visor with your scrubs or gown at chest
 - Be careful so that your contaminated gown sleeves do not touch your face – keep your arm and forearm away from your face.
- When removing face shields or goggles, only touch straps – never the front or where the strap meets the shield or goggle
- When removing your mask or N95 respirator, only touch the straps. Be very careful not to touch the front of the mask or N95 respirator and avoid flipping the N95
- Another safety tip is “garbage bin etiquette”:
 - Don't crowd around the disposal bins – only 2 people at a time. This will help avoid contaminating each other. Physical distancing is important around garbage bins.
 - When disposing of your gown, make sure that all of gown is completely inside the disposal bin to protect others around you including all health care workers, cleaners, porters etc

Tips on promoting a Culture of Safety:

- Don't underestimate the complexity of safe PPE use during COVID-19
- Mistakes are common, especially when the health care worker is inexperienced, fatigued, overconfident or distracted
- Be prepared to speak up and correct something that didn't go well
- It's not about shame or blame; it's about safety.
- If a mistake or breach is identified by the health care worker or “buddy”, remember to pause, perform hand hygiene and refer to the visual aid before proceeding

Tips for how the Buddy System for PPE works:

- The mechanics of the buddy system are that only the buddy reads the instructions
- The buddy calls the step number FIRST, then directs the clinician on safely proceeding through the step

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- The health care worker only focuses on the buddy's instructions and own action while performing donning or doffing
- The buddy observes and guides the process and only proceeds to reading out the next step after the current step is completed correctly
- The health care worker completes the process before changing roles with the buddy
- Having a “buddy” and making the best use of this system significantly reduces the risk of self-contamination, particularly during doffing

Tips for designing **Visual Aids** for PPE:

- Keep instructions short (3-5 words/step)
- Number each step
- Use LARGE fonts
- Don't use pictures
- Use different colors for donning and doffing
- Be specific! Create one tool for each site/unit with unique context (i.e. ICU, ER, OR, Clinics)

Tips for teaching **Buddy System** Using **Visual Aids**:

- First deconstruct step-by-step; role model the buddy system while allowing for practice of procedural skills in a step-by-step approach
- Second, allow for uninterrupted practice and then provide direct feedback (this allows for failure – failure during this phase increases awareness to importance of strictly following recently learned protocol and learners become more engaged and acceptive of training)
- Third (if possible): allow for practice in a simulated team-based scenario where donning and doffing is embedded within the scenario. This allows for IPE and experiences that arise due to teamwork (i.e. crowding around disposal bins and delays due to team members donning/doffing proper PPE).
- Plan to repeat several times during training to allow for deliberate practicing

Tips **Summary**:

- 1) **Using a visual aid is very important**
- 2) **Having a PPE buddy is a personal safety priority**
- 3) **Doffing is a critical step and the moment of highest risk for self-contamination**
- 4) **Speak up for safety**
- 5) **Go slow to keep safe**

