

Review of Types of Precautions

With the current coronavirus situation, it is important to remember the difference between contact, droplet, and airborne precautions when caring for patients. Please remember the following:

Contact Precautions are used for patients with known or suspected infections that represent an increased risk for contact transmission. This means that one must use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for these patients, including gloves and gown.

Droplet Precautions are used for patients known or suspected to be infected with pathogens transmitted by respiratory droplets that are generated by a patient who is coughing, sneezing, or talking. This means that one must use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for these patients which consists of a procedure mask (also known as a facemask or surgical mask).

Airborne Precautions are used for patients known or suspected to be infected with pathogens transmitted by the airborne route (such as COVID-19, tuberculosis, measles, chickenpox, or disseminated herpes zoster). This means that one must use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for these patients which consists of a fit-tested N95 mask.

Patients who are positive for or suspected of having COVID-19 should be on contact, droplet, and airborne precautions. Eyewear, such as goggles should be worn (glasses do not count). Because goggles are reused, they should be cleaned with disinfecting wipes after use.