

Use of Homemade Gowns for Patient Care when Commercially-produced Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is Unavailable

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The COVID-19 situation continues to evolve and there is now widespread community transmission across Iowa. There is a national shortage of PPE, and public and private officials are working to address national and global supply challenges. Due to the current limitations on PPE, there may come a time during this response when commercially manufactured gowns are no longer readily available. If commercially-produced gowns are no longer available, healthcare workers can use homemade cloth gowns during patient care activities. These homemade gowns are not considered PPE since their ability to protect against COVID-19 has not yet been studied, however if they are the only protection available, they should be used.

Health care facilities who choose to receive local donations from Iowans should plan for a drop site and provide direction to volunteers that prevents entry into the health care facility.

Guidance for use of homemade gowns:

- Care should be taken to ensure that HCP do not touch outer surfaces of the gown during care. Reusable (i.e., washable) gowns are typically made of polyester or polyester-cotton fabrics.
- Gowns made of these fabrics can be safely laundered according to routine procedures and reused.
- Laundry operations and personnel may need to be augmented to facilitate additional washing loads and cycles.
- Systems should be established to routinely inspect, maintain (e.g., mend a small hole in a gown, replace missing fastening ties), and replace reusable gowns when needed (e.g., when they are thin or ripped).

Gowns should be prioritized for the following activities:

- During care activities where splashes and sprays are anticipated, which typically includes aerosol generating procedures.
- During the following high-contact patient care activities that provide opportunities for transfer of pathogens to the hands and clothing of healthcare providers, such as:
 - Dressing, bathing/showering, transferring, providing hygiene, changing linens, changing briefs or assisting with toileting, device care or use, wound care.

Surgical gowns should be prioritized for surgical and other sterile procedures.

For additional guidance for the use of homemade isolation gowns for **extended use and re-use** visit the following CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/isolation-gowns.html>