Before caring for clients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, CAREGivers must receive comprehensive training on when and what PPE is necessary, how to don (put on) and doff (take off) PPE, limitations of PPE, and proper care, maintenance and disposal of PPE.

Medical or surgical masks should cover both your mouth and nose. They are designed to block small and large-particle droplets, splashes, sprays and splatter, which may contain viruses or bacteria that can be harmful to you. It’s important to know the difference between a surgical mask and an N95 respirator. Unlike surgical masks, N95 respirators fit more securely to your face and against your skin and can filter airborne particles. An N95 or higher respirator is the preferred method to protecting your face, but when not available, a lesser facemask is an acceptable alternative.

**Donning**

1. After you’ve taken an unused medical mask from the box, make sure it is intact without holes or tears. If it does, do not use, throw it away immediately and get a new one.
2. To ensure the mask fits properly, the top part of it will have a bendable, yet stiff, edge that can be molded to your nose. The bendable side should be facing upwards before putting the face mask on.
3. Because there are so many types of medical masks, here are the different ways to fit it to your face based on the attachments available:
   1. Ear loops – some masks have an ear loop on both sides of the mask. Pick this type of mask up by the loop, put one loop around your ear, then place the other loop on the other ear.
   2. Ties or straps – some masks have pieces of fabric for you to tie around the back of your head. Most masks with ties have both an upper and lower tie/straps. Pick up the mask by the upper ties, place them around the back of your head and then attach them together in a bow. You’ll tie the lower band once you’ve adjusted the bendable section to your nose.
   3. Bands – some masks have two elastic bands that are placed around the back of your head (instead of your ears). Most N95s are this type of mask. Hold the mask in front of your face, then pull the top band over your head and place it at the crown of your head. Then, pull the bottom band over the top of your head and place it at the base of your skull.
4. With the surgical mask properly placed on your head, use your index finger and thumb to pinch the bendable section around the bridge of your nose.
5. Place mask straps so that the mask is properly adjusted to your face. It should cover your face and mouth, and the bottom edge should be under your chin.

**Doffing**  
*Removal depends on the type of mask used, but here’s an overview.*

1. To take your tied mask off, untie the straps but be mindful not to touch the mask as it is contaminated.
2. To remove a mask with ear loops, remove the loops but be careful not to touch the mask as it is contaminated.
3. To remove a mask with elastic straps (this may be the N95 or similar), remove the lower strap first and then the one on top of your head, but be mindful not to touch the mask as it is contaminated.
4. Surgical masks are designed for one time use and should be discarded after use. Remove the mask as directed above and place it in a plastic bag that you can seal. Then, throw the plastic bag in a garbage bin.

As a reminder, if you are working with someone in airborne or droplet isolation the appropriate steps for donning and doffing full PPE are:

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| **DONNING**  Secure any loose hair or wear a hair cover  Perform hand hygiene  Put on shoe covers  Put on gown  Perform hand hygiene  Put on mask/respirator  Put on eye protection  Put on gloves | **DOFFING**  Remove Shoe Covers  Remove gown and gloves together  Perform hand hygiene  Remove eye protection  Remove facemask  Perform hand hygiene |