

# Protective isolation precautions

**Prompt: poster colour is white: use this explainer with the white protective isolation precaution poster.**

**Patient placement:** whenever possible prioritise patients with identified requirements for protective isolation in single rooms (preferably with dedicated toilet/ ensuite facilities and ensure that the doors always remain closed except when necessary for entry/ exit of patient / staff. Consider safety risks (risk assess patient placement in a single room with door closed, for example by the person in charge (PIC).

## Step 1

**Before each patient interaction, a health and care worker must assess the patient/ situation and complete a point of care risk assessment (PCRA)\***

A point of care risk assessment (PCRA) is an integral part of standard practice which should be performed by every health and care worker **BEFORE** every patient interaction to allow them to accurately assess the risk **of exposing themselves and/ or others to infectious diseases/ agents/ transmissible microorganisms.**

This PCRA supports the selection of appropriate actions and personal protective equipment (PPE) in addition to any infection prevention and control (IPC) recommendations already in place.

Consider occupational aspects, (including health and care worker vaccination) to minimise any risk to patients.

Refer to the following link for details on health and care worker vaccination: [Chapter 04 - Immunisation and Health Information for Health-Care Workers and Others in At-Risk Occupations | HIQA](#)

This is a supporting tool, and risk assessments are likely to vary from person to person.

### 1. PATIENT

**Consider:**

- The aim of protective isolation is to prevent the transfer of infection caused by transmissible micro-organisms to vulnerable patients who are immunocompromised because of their illness or treatment.
- Consider safety risks (risk assess patient placement in a single room)
- Support the patient with hand hygiene, as appropriate.

### 2. TASKS

**Consider:**

- What type of task am I about to perform? Is this a non-clinical interaction?
- Is this a clinical intervention?

- Am I about to perform a task for example providing personal care, bathing, assisting with toileting, carrying out a procedure, such as wound care, catheter care (high contact / low contact)
- Will the task increase the likelihood that my skin/ clothing will become contaminated? (high level/ low contact).

### 3. ENVIRONMENT

#### Consider:

- Is the person located in a single room with dedicated toilet/ ensuite facilities? Ensure that the room door always remains closed. (risk assess patient placement in a single room).
- Think about equipment. Is there dedicated equipment for the patient (blood pressure monitor, cuff, thermometer, hoist sling)?
- Is the equipment shared, for example commode, hoist, blood glucose monitor, blood pressure monitor? If yes, clean and disinfect reusable equipment between each use.

## Step 2

**Choose appropriate PPE and implement the required actions in line with standard precautions including the following:**

- **Clean your hands in line with the WHO 5 moments.** Ensure access to hand hygiene products/ facilities and select as appropriate, (alcohol based hand rub / handwashing)
- **Gloves:** Risk assess glove requirement, consider in relation to tasks (such as contact with chemicals or if there is a risk of blood/body fluid exposure\*\* (for example: urine, vomitus, faecal matter, respiratory secretions etc.)
- **Apron:** Low level contact / interaction with the patient
- **Gown:** High level contact / interaction with the patient
- **Masks:** Risk assess requirement (consider patient's status)
- **Disposal of PPE:** Risk assess disposal in healthcare risk waste / non risk waste streams (inside the patient's room).

**NOTE:** Reassessment of PPE requirements should occur as the clinical scenario develops to reflect changes in transmission risk.

Visitors do not routinely need to wear PPE. They should be encouraged to clean their hands before and after visiting the patient.

Advise and support visitors, as appropriate.

Visitors should not visit if they have any acute onset of respiratory or GI symptoms.

For further information, refer to. **Department of Health (2023). NCG, National Clinical Guideline No. 30 Infection Prevention and Control.**

**Available at:** <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-health/publications/infection-prevention-and-control-ipc/>



\*PCRA

\*\* Gloves off

**Footnote**

The term patient refers to patients, service users, clients, residents, person, supported individual