

IPS statement on infection prevention & control and COVID-19

The Infection Prevention Society are experts in preventing the transmission of infection in healthcare environments. We fully support and endorse the guidance on the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the management of COVID-19 from the joint UK Public Health bodies and published in the Guidance for Infection Prevention & Control in Healthcare Settings [<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>]. This guidance clearly recommends an appropriate and safe level of PPE for protecting healthcare workers against this virus which is transmitted by respiratory droplets and contact with contaminated surfaces.

We fully endorse the published guidance that FFP3 respirators and long-sleeved gowns are only necessary where there is a risk of aerosol generating procedures (AGP). These AGPs have been defined and agreed by experts in the field.

Whilst we appreciate the natural concern of healthcare workers to protect themselves, the main risk of acquiring infection comes from touching their own mucous membranes with contaminated hands or gloves. The demand from healthcare workers to use FFP3 respirators and gowns for non-aerosol generating procedures will reduce the availability of this equipment for those staff who are at greatest risk. We are therefore calling on clinical colleagues and specialist societies, whose expertise is not infection prevention, to refrain from creating confusion, anxiety and alarm by contradicting the advice from experts in this field.

About IPS:

The Infection Prevention Society is an independent charity with a 2,000 strong member network. Our vision is that no person is harmed by a preventable infection. We strive to fulfil our vision by informing, promoting and sustaining expert infection prevention policy and practice where care is delivered at local, national, and international level. Our commitment to communicate with and educate clinical professionals and the public enables us to play a central role in making treatment and care safer for patients and their relatives.

Website: www.ips.uk.net Twitter: @IPS_Infection