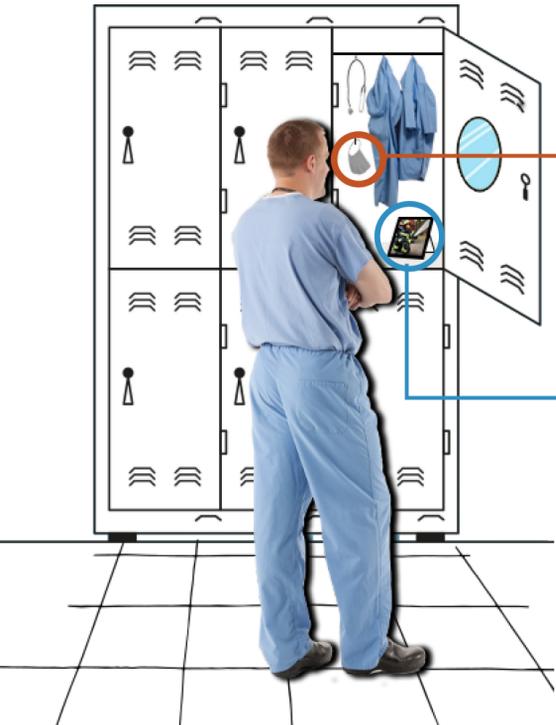


# WHAT IS PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT?



Personal protective equipment, or PPE, is gear used to protect you from and reduce exposure to anything that can make you sick.



**Many jobs use PPE.**

Firefighters use equipment to protect themselves from hazards on the job.

They use helmets to protect their head from things that fall down. They use boots, pants, coats, and gloves to protect their body from the heat of the fires.

**All of that is PPE.**

**In healthcare, we use PPE to protect us from our most common problem....GERMS**



PPE in healthcare is unique because it serves two purposes...



To protect **YOU** from...

**GERMS**

To protect your **PATIENTS** and **COWORKERS** from...

**When you wear a mask,**

you use it to protect yourself from particles and germs that can make you sick, while also reducing the spread of your possible germs.



**Another example is when you use gloves and a gown**

You are keeping germs off your hands and clothes, while reducing the spread of any germs you may have, to other people and surfaces as you work.



## REMEMBER

We also use...

**physical barriers**

**telemedicine**

**ventilation**

**cleaning**

**and disinfection**

But when those options are not enough and you need to interact with patients to provide good care, use...

**P**

**P**

**E**

to reduce the risk of spreading germs between yourself and your patient.

PPE is important, but it's not magic. It's one of the many tools we use to protect ourselves.

## ONE LAST TIP

**PPE does not have a brain or mind of its own.**

It relies on you and your mind to think about how to use it and use it correctly.

**As you use PPE**

think through the following questions

What PPE are you using?

How do you use the PPE?

Is it the right time to use the PPE?

These are questions you should ask yourself every time you use PPE to make sure you and your patients are protected as you work.

**Now you understand why PPE is important and why you should use it correctly.**

For more information on topics like this, visit [cdc.gov/projectfirstline](https://www.cdc.gov/projectfirstline). See all of NNPHI's Project Firstline interactive learning experiences.

