

Ministry of health

Infection control directorate



Infection Control Guidelines for Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs) during COVID-19 pandemic

The highest risk of transmission of respiratory viruses is during AGPs of the respiratory tract. **Precautions shall be taken during AGPs on possible and confirmed cases, regardless of the clinical setting and the same precautions apply for all patients regardless of case status in contexts of sustained COVID-19 transmission.**

- For patients with possible or confirmed COVID-19, any of these potentially infectious AGPs should only be carried out when essential.
- Where possible, these procedures should be carried out in Airborne Infection Isolation Rooms (AIIRs) or a single room with the doors shut.
- Only those healthcare staff who are needed to undertake the procedure should be present.
- The recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) is:
- A long-sleeved disposable fluid repellent gown (covering the arms and body), a respirator (N95 equivalent or higher), a full-face shield or visor and gloves
- Where an AGP is a single procedure, PPE is subject to single use with disposal after each patient contact or procedure as appropriate.
- Clean and disinfect procedure room surfaces promptly as recommended.

The following procedures are currently considered to be potentially infectious AGPs for COVID-19:

- intubation, extubation and related procedures, for example, manual ventilation and open suctioning of the respiratory tract (including the upper respiratory tract)
- tracheotomy or tracheostomy procedures (insertion or open suctioning or removal)
- bronchoscopy and upper ENT airway procedures that involve suctioning
- upper gastro-intestinal endoscopy where there is open suctioning of the upper respiratory tract
- surgery and post mortem procedures involving high-speed devices
- some dental procedures (for example, high-speed drilling)
- non-invasive ventilation (NIV); Bi-level Positive Airway Pressure Ventilation (BiPAP) and Continuous Positive Airway Pressure Ventilation (CPAP)
- induction of sputum
- cardiopulmonary resuscitation

Based on limited available data, it is uncertain whether aerosols generated from some procedures may be infectious, such as:

- Nebulizer administration
- High flow O2 delivery

A high risk acute inpatient care area where AGPs are regularly performed can use recommended PPE for AGPs such as :

- intensive care and high dependency care units (ICU or HDU)
- emergency department resuscitation areas
- operating theatres, where AGPs are performed
- endoscopy units, where bronchoscopy, upper gastrointestinal or nasoendoscopy are performed.

References:

- Public Health England. personal protective equipment updated 3rd May 2020.
- CDC Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control FAQs for COVID-19. last reviewed: April 23, 2020