

Health Workers (HWs) AT-RISK for COVID-19

HWs can move from one group to another group depending on the activities they do

HIGH-RISK exposure HWs are those who have had prolonged close contact with known and unknown COVID-19 patients where the patient and the HW were not wearing a medical mask. HWs doing aerosol-generating procedures are considered high-risk as well.

MEDIUM-RISK exposures include HWs who had prolonged close contact with known or unknown COVID-19 patients who were wearing a medical mask while the HW was exposed to potentially infectious bodily fluids with SARS-CoV-2.

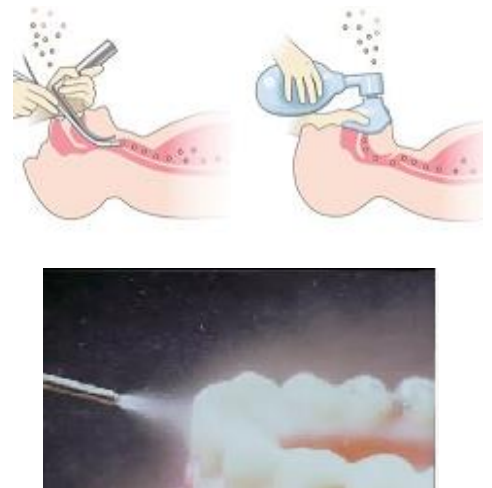
LOW-RISK exposures refer to HWs with brief interactions with known or unknown COVID-19 patients or prolonged close contact with COVID-19 patients who were wearing a medical mask while HWs were also wearing a medical mask or respirator.

Who are these HWs: Frontline, Emergency and In-patient HWs, Dentists and Dental Assistants, Laboratory personnel handling suspected COVID-19 specimens, Mortuary Workers, Cleaners, Porters, Laundry Workers, Waste Management Workers, Allied HWs, HWs working in medical wards

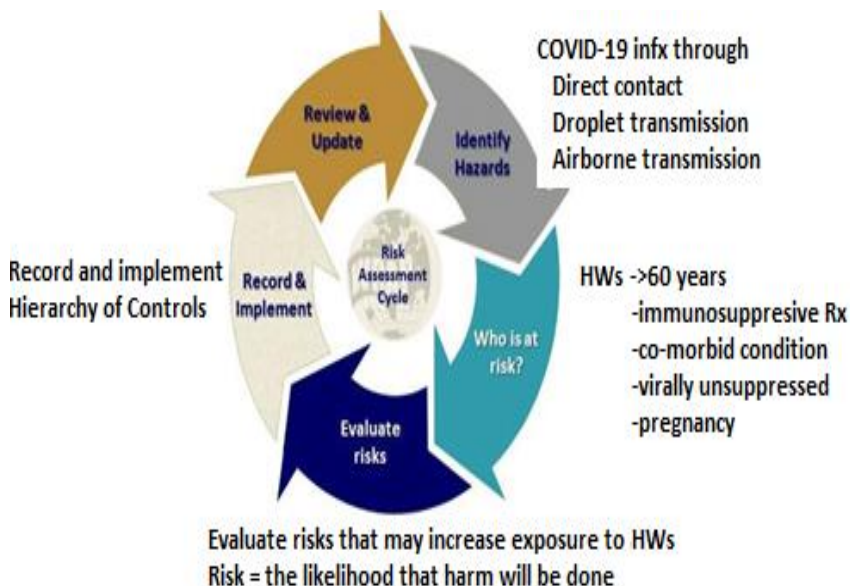
What are aerosol-generating procedures (AGPs)?

AGPs are those that stimulate coughing or promote the generation of fine airborne viral particles (aerosols) resulting in the risk of airborne transmission of COVID-19 e.g.:

- Invasive respiratory procedures (tracheal intubation, manual ventilation, intubation, bronchoscopy, tracheostomy)
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
- Dentistry procedures e.g. high-speed drilling procedures
- Nebuliser treatment
- Oropharyngeal and nasopharyngeal specimen collection or handling

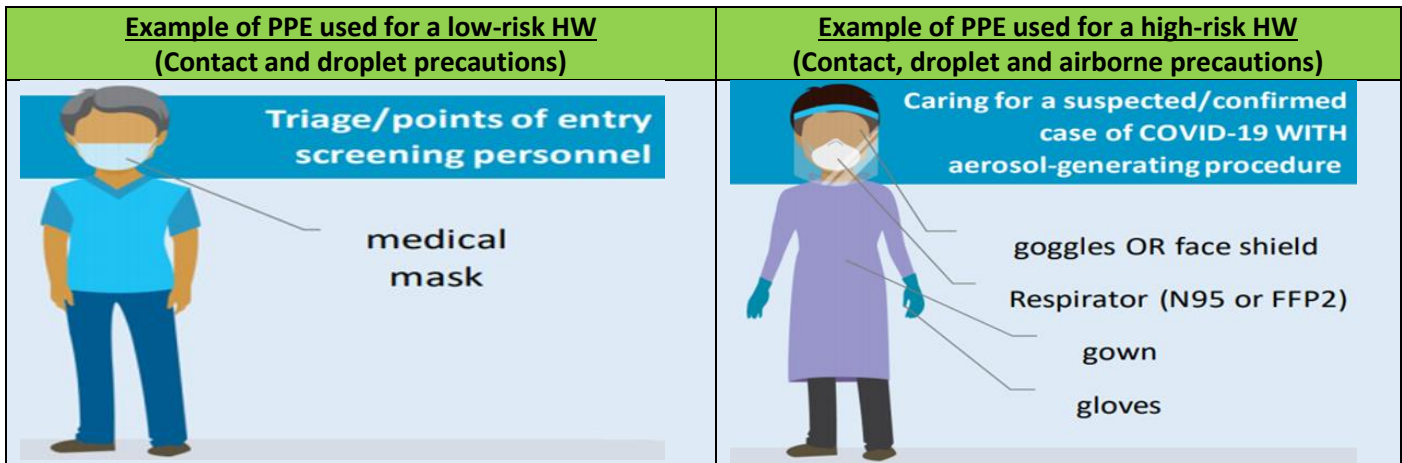
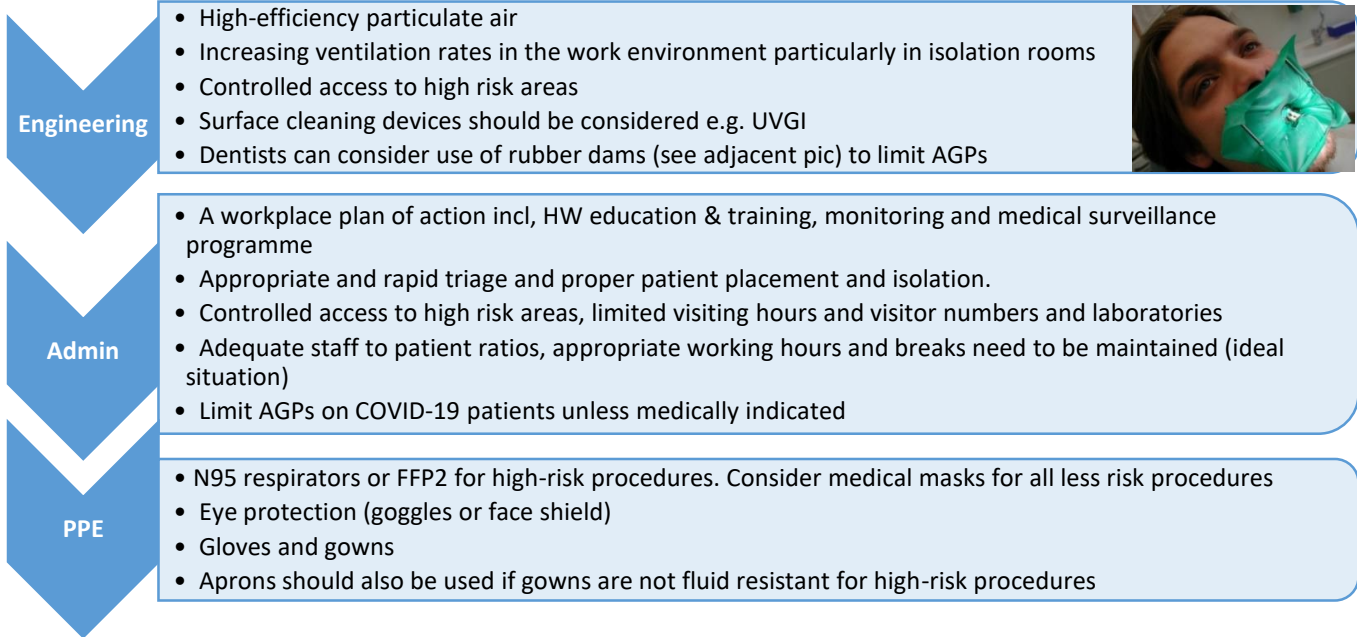


A **RISK ASSESSMENT** should be conducted in the workplace to determine the **RISK of EXPOSURE** to COVID-19. Recommended controls to minimise risk should be implemented and communicated to all employees.








Monitoring of HWs	
Active monitoring	Potentially exposed HWs should be monitored for fever or respiratory symptoms. For HWs with high- or medium-risk exposures, monitor at least daily.
Self-monitoring with delegated supervision by workplace	HWs perform self-monitoring with oversight by their health facility's occupational health or infection control team to measure temperature and assess symptoms prior to starting work each day.

Hierarchy of Controls for AT-RISK HWs



Difference between masks and respirators

Surgical masks	Respirators
	
<p>Surgical masks are loose fitting</p> <p>Surgical masks prevent droplets being expelled into the environment by the wearer and protect patients and operative site.</p>	<p>Respirators are tight fitting</p> <p>used to reduce the potential contact of the wearer to airborne hazardous contaminants.</p>
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REFERENCES:

World Health Organization. Rational use of personal protective equipment for coronavirus disease (COVID-19): interim guidance, 27 February 2020. World Health Organization; 2020.

US Department of Health Center for Diseases Control. Interim Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>. Last accessed: March 2020

Protecting HCWs-strategy for the frontline against COVID-19 v2 (UKZN document)

NIOH COVID-19 Workplace Hotline: 0800 21 21 75

NICD COVID-19 National Hotline: 080 002 9999

www.nioh.ac.za and www.nicd.ac.za

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