

Gown or apron: Principles for risk assessing

The choice of wearing an apron or gown is based on a risk assessment that is documented in the [Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare](#) and is supported by the [Clinical Excellence Commission Infection Prevention and Control Guidance](#) documents.

A risk assessment approach must be used to choose between an apron or a gown for **standard** and/or **transmission-based precautions**. The following points should be considered when conducting the risk assessment:

- level of direct contact with the patient
- tasks or procedures the health worker will be doing
- anticipated exposure to body fluids
- if transmission-based precautions are required
- patient factors such as their ability to practice respiratory hygiene and hand hygiene
- the patient's ability to wear a disposable mask (source control)
- procedural requirements

If the health worker anticipates exposure to body substances on an uncovered part of their skin or uniform, then the risk assessment will direct them to an apron or gown for standard and/or transmission-based precautions.

When an apron or a gown is worn, it should be changed between patients.

Extended use of a gown or apron is not routinely recommended. It may only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances and where minimal contact is anticipated for example COVID-19 testing centres.



Aprons

Disposable aprons are worn to protect uniforms and clothing from moisture, body fluids or soiling during direct patient care or contact with the patient's environment or their equipment. An apron is usually applied when risk assessment of contact or exposure is minimal.



Gowns

Disposable gowns are worn to protect arms, shoulders, uniforms and clothing from moisture, body fluids or soiling during direct patient care or contact with the patient's environment/equipment. A gown is usually applied when risk assessment of contact or exposure is greater in time and/or volume.