

I support a person with disability at home who requires non-invasive respiratory support (VPAP/BiBAP/CPAP). Do I need to consider additional PPE during the coronavirus pandemic?

The short answer is no. You should continue practicing as you normally would, but you must stay vigilant with washing hands regularly and maintaining social distancing.

Non-invasive ventilation

Non-invasive respiratory support is a means of providing ventilator support to people with either upper airway obstructions or some type of respiratory issues or failure. This covers **CPAP** (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) and **BiPAP** (Bi level Positive Airways Pressure).

Evidence suggests that non-invasive ventilation procedures produce larger droplets rather than aerosols (exhaled air containing the virus). These droplets are mostly confined to within one metre due to their large mass.

There is limited evidence that exhaled air or aerosol of viral matter is spread widely when a well-fitting mask is worn. However, aerosols and larger infection droplets can spread from a leak around the mask, the ventilator circuit or the exhalation port. The use of a viral filter over the exhalation port may provide some protection from infection. Your respirator clinic or doctor will be able to advise.

Use hand sanitiser or soap and water to wash your hands regularly to reduce the risk of spreading of infection. Discourage all visits from anyone who is unwell.

If you, the Primary Carer become unwell

If you have a cough, fever, shortness of breath or sore throat immediately arrange for another carer to provide support. Distance yourself as best you can and use a disposable surgical mask when you are around others. Take extra precautions, such as sleeping in a separate bedroom until you are sure you do not have coronavirus (COVID-19). Arrange for

testing from either your GP or your nearest COVID-19 testing clinic. Find out where clinics are located through this link: https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/COVID-clinics

If the person you are caring for becomes unwell

If the person you are supporting develops a cough, fever, shortness of breath or sore throat, encourage them to wear a surgical mask when you or others are in the room and arrange a GP appointment.

Support staff

If you are caring for someone who is directed to isolate by Public Health or WA Police, or is suspected or confirmed with COVID-19, you will need to speak to your manager about care options. You may also need additional personal protective equipment (PPE) to care for your client.

For further information see [Advice for use of personal protective equipment for workers in community settings](#).

- Page 3 – Different types of exposure (close contact, handling the person's possessions, and body fluids).
- Page 4 and 5 – Decision Tree on when and what PPE to use.
- Page 6 – The correct sequence for putting on and taking off PPE.

Reference

Australian Government Department of Health (2020). [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resources](#).

Government of Western Australia Department of Health (2020). [Advice for use of personal protective equipment for workers in community settings](#).

Government of Western Australia Department of Health (2020). [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#).