

# Gloves: why, who, when



by Indian Scientists Response to Covid

<https://indscicov.in/>

   IndSciCovid

In general, hand hygiene is crucial. Gloves are not required if you make sure to wash your hands regularly and try not to touch your face until you have washed. Gloves mean little if you use them all the time and also touch surfaces that have viruses and your face. It is best to use gloves only in high risk settings in the healthcare environment.



## How do gloves help protect you from the virus?

The most important way to prevent viruses from getting into you is to wash your hands several times in a day. If you do go outside your home, minimize the number of surfaces that you touch while outside, and remember to wash your hands (and if possible, bathe) with soap as soon as you get home. Some people (shop keepers, delivery workers) should wash their hands more frequently while working.

Doctors do not advise the use of gloves in a public setting by untrained workers. If you choose to wear gloves, remember that gloves can only prevent viruses from getting on the skin of your hands. If you touch your face with gloves that might carry viruses, the gloves do not stop the virus from getting inside you.

## Who should wear gloves (and when)?

If you are caring for a person who is under quarantine or isolation, then you can wear gloves while in physical contact with them as well as while cleaning surfaces they might have touched, or while handling their clothes or bedsheets.



## What are the different types of gloves?

Gloves may be of different kinds: rubber (or cloth) gloves and medical (or surgical) gloves (latex, nitrile).

Some rubber and cloth gloves can be reused after they are washed with soap and water. Medical gloves have to be discarded after every use. Before disposing, soak in 1% household bleach.

Because Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including medical gloves are in short supply, it is best not to use medical gloves unless essential.

## How should you put on, use and take off gloves?

If you choose to wear gloves, remember that the whole point of using gloves may be undone if you don't wear and use them properly:

**Wearing on gloves:** Make sure you wash your hands before touching and putting on the gloves.

**While using gloves:** Remove gloves if you are going to touch surfaces that you know to be clean. Definitely do not touch your face while wearing gloves.

**Taking off gloves:** Take off gloves such that you do not touch the outer surface of the gloves with your bare fingers. Take off medical gloves without touching the outside surface. Before disposing, soak in 1% household bleach. Wash your hands with soap and water after you take off and discard your gloves.

**Reusing gloves:** In the case of reusable gloves, after you take them off, immediately drop them in soap water. Wash thoroughly, dry and store them in a clean, dry place.



Image credits:

Rabin, Sayantan, Columbia University

Every attempt has been made for scientific accuracy; in case any inaccuracies are found, please bring it to our notice at [indscicov@gmail.com](mailto:indscicov@gmail.com).