WHAT IS PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT?

Personal protective equipment, or PPE, is gear used to protect yourself from anything that can make you sick.

Many jobs use PPE.

Firefighters use equipment to protect themselves from harmful materials on the job.

They use helmets to protect their head from objects that can fall down. They use boots, pants, coats, and gloves to protect their body from the heat of the fire.

All of that is PPE.

In healthcare, we use PPE to protect us from our most common problem...GERMS

PPE in healthcare is unique because it serves two purposes...

To protect YOU from...

To protect your PATIENTS and COWORKERS from...

GERMS

When you wear a mask, you are protecting yourself from particles and germs that can make you sick, while also reducing the amount of your possible germs.

Another example is when you use gloves and a gown.

You are keeping germs off your hands and clothes, while reducing the spread of any germs you may have in your hands and clothes, as you work.

REMEMBER

PPE is important, but it’s no magic bullet. We need more than PPE to stop the spread of germs.

Other ways to stop the spread of germs are...

physical barriers

telemedicine

ventilation

cleaning

disinfection

PPE does not have a brain or mind of its own. It relies on you and your mind to think about how to use it and use it correctly.

As you use PPE, think through the following questions...

What PPE are you using?

How do you use the PPE?

Is it the right time to use the PPE?

Are there questions you should ask yourself every time you use PPE? Of course you and your patients are protected as you work.

Now you understand why PPE is important and why you should use it correctly.

For more information on topics like this, visit cdc.gov/projectfirstline.

See all of NNPHI’s Project Firstline interactive learning experiences.