

Why you don't always need gloves when giving vaccines

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is designed to protect you from harm. Its use must be proportional, based on the situation and activity. When giving vaccines, you must assess your risk of harm and decide whether gloves are needed once you've reduced risks through good hand hygiene. Here's our advice.

Do you really need gloves?

Gloves aren't needed when giving routine vaccines in most cases. That's because vaccine administration is a minimal contact procedure.

The UK infection prevention and control guidance clarifies this. Wearing gloves can get in the way of maintaining good hand hygiene, lead to the spread of infection and cause skin irritation.

It also increases waste production and costs more.

Clean your hands

It's important to clean your hands between each patient and during the procedure when preparing and administering vaccines. Hand washing or using alcohol hand gel will remove or kill germs, including the SARS-CoV2 virus responsible for COVID-19 disease.

You should stay bare below the elbow, keep nails short, without nail varnish, and avoid wearing jewellery so you can wash hands effectively and ensure good hand hygiene. Maintaining clean hands supports patient confidence and reduces the risk of infection through multiple patient contacts.

Use hand cream

Frequently washing hands and using alcohol gel can make hands sore but wearing gloves doesn't avoid this. Use hand creams and emollients regularly to minimise dryness and maintain skin integrity.



Please note

If you've assessed your risk and think you do need to wear gloves, you must remember that gloves are single use, they must be changed between each patient and you must clean your hands before putting on a new pair.

Gloves should not be washed and alcohol gel can't be used to clean them.