



The Association of Coloproctology of Great Britain and Ireland

A company limited by guarantee and registered in England & Wales

Company Reg No 5962281; Registered Charity 1118063

Royal College of Surgeons of England

35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields

London WC2A 3PE

+44 (0)20 7973 0373

admin@acpgbi.org.uk

11 April 2020

To all Medical Directors

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PPE in operating theatres for General Surgery during COVID-19 Pandemic

The most frequent question asked by ACPGBI Members this week has been about appropriate personal protective equipment in the operating theatre. The Intercollegiate Surgical Royal Colleges have worked with ACPGBI on safe practice in General Surgery. Through the Royal Colleges of Surgeons of England and Edinburgh, we fed into the recently updated and revised Public Health England advice <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>.

We have now been made aware by some of our Members that their institutions are not following this advice or interpreting it differently. In summary, the appropriate PPE in the “higher risk acute care area with possible or confirmed case(s)” of COVID-19 is:

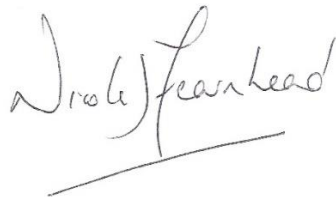
- disposable gloves
- disposable plastic apron
- disposable fluid-resistant gown
- filtering face piece respirator
- eye and face protection

Any operating theatre where aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) are carried out is designated a higher risk acute area and the PHE guidance does not place a time limit on how long the risk remains. Their recommendation is intended for the protection of all staff in the operating theatre and not just those carrying out intubation. It is recognised that there are aspects of surgery which are also potentially AGPs and overall risk in the operating room environment is high.

The updated Intercollegiate General Surgery Guidance on COVID-19, to which ACPGBI contributed, fully endorses the position on level of PPE required in the operating theatre: <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/coronavirus/joint-guidance-for-surgeons-v2/>. We would be grateful for your help in assuring that all theatre personnel involved in delivering general surgical procedures in your institution during the COVID-19 pandemic receive the level of protection recommended by the combined Public Health agencies of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

With many thanks for your help in this matter, and kind regards

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicola Fearnhead". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Miss Nicola Fearnhead
President, ACPGBI

President: Miss Nicola Fearnhead
President-in-Waiting: Professor Peter Sagar
Honorary Treasurer: Mr Seamus Kelly
Chair Education & Training: Miss Laura Hancock
Chair External Affairs: Mr Shahab Siddiqi
Asst Honorary Treasurer: Mr Artur Harikrishnan

President-Elect: Professor Steven Brown
Honorary Secretary: Mr Charles Maxwell Armstrong
Chair Research & Audit: Mr Austin Acheson
Chair Multidisciplinary Clinical: Mr Ciaran Walsh
Asst Honorary Secretary: Mr James Wheeler
BDRF Representative: Miss Nicola Fearnhead