

COVID-19 Protocol for Use of the Human Guide Technique

Health and Safety

To promote health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, together with the use of a face mask, the following protocol using disposable sleeves (or similar) can be followed during use of the Human Guide technique and its variations. The following guidelines can be included in any Provider Support Agreement, Orientation & Mobility Plan, Service Delivery Plan or other document that includes direction for use of the Human Guide technique. Please also be sure to consult with your local nurse educator or infection control educator with questions related to specific circumstances or individuals.

COVID-19 Precaution for Use of Human Guide

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, disposable sleeves can be worn by guides during use of the Human Guide technique with individuals who have vision impairment or blindness. Although cough etiquette suggests covering a cough or sneeze into the elbow/upper sleeve, it must be noted that individuals while using Human Guide are often gripping this same area (that many use to shield a cough or sneeze). Depending upon life/work circumstance, some Human Guides may also frequently guide multiple individuals over the course of a day. Proper use of disposable sleeves helps to keep arms and clothing clean from dirt, particulates, germs and liquids; and provides a level of protection from possible cross-contamination.

Cough/Sneeze

- Human Guide(s) should be prepared with disposable tissues readily available, and whenever practical and possible, use the tissue to cover a sneeze or cough.

COVID-19 Protocol for Use of Human Guide (continued)

Face Mask

- Face mask(s) should be worn during use of the Human Guide technique as needed/directed, especially as social distance cannot be kept during use of this technique.

When to Wear Disposable Sleeves

- Disposable sleeves are to be put on prior to initiating contact for use of Human Guide.
- Wear one disposable sleeve on the appropriate arm if an individual holds only your right or left arm during use of the Human Guide technique.
- Wear two disposable sleeves, (one on each arm) if the individual being guided needs to switch sides during use of the Human Guide technique.
- Disposable sleeves are to be properly removed while wearing nitrile/disposable gloves and thrown away after use by Human Guide to prevent cross-contamination. (Please see protocol for removing sleeve).
- Disposable sleeves are to be properly removed and disposed of after working with one individual and a fresh sleeve put on before working with someone else to prevent cross-contamination, following instructions as bulleted above.

Handwashing

- Prior to putting on the disposable sleeve(s), follow the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for handwashing.
 - Wet your hands with clean, warm, running water, and apply soap.
 - Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
 - Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
 - Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
 - Dry your hands using a clean towel.
 - Turn off Faucets using a clean, dry, paper towel.

How to Put on Disposable Sleeve(s)

- Wash hands properly for 20 seconds with soap and water, following CDC guidelines.
- Pull plastic sleeve protector up high enough to cover forearm, elbow and upper arm.

COVID-19 Protocol for Use of Human Guide (continued)

How to Remove Disposable Sleeve(s)

- Wash hands properly for 20 seconds with soap and water, following CDC guidelines.
- Wearing nitrile/disposable gloves peel the sleeve away from the top, turning it inside out.
- Roll the sleeve into a bundle and discard in a trash receptacle.
- To remove gloves, grasp the outside edge near the wrist.
- Peel the glove away from the hand, turning the glove inside out.
- Hold it in the opposite gloved hand.
- Slide an ungloved finger under the wrist of the remaining glove, then peel it off from the inside, creating a “bag” for both used gloves.
- Discard in trash receptacle.
- Wash hands properly for 20 seconds with soap and water, following CDC guidelines.

Alternatives to Use in Place of Disposable Sleeves

- If bare arm(s), Human Guide must wash hands and arm(s) before and after guiding an individual.
- Have change(s) of clothing on hand (such as long sleeved shirts) so that the upper sleeve(s) are clean and fresh for use of Human Guide.
- Have additional outer layers available to be worn by the guide to cover the upper sleeve.
- Protective arm sleeves could be made of fabric and re-used after laundering.
- All clothing/fabric items must be laundered after each use.

Resources

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Guidelines for Handwashing

- <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

Disposable Sleeves

- As product availability changes frequently by company, please use internet search terms for “disposable sleeves” or “protective sleeves”.

Please note: These Web links are being offered only as informational resources.
It is not our intention to endorse or recommend the sites.

COVID-19 Protocol for Use of Human Guide (continued)

Resources (continued)

Donning and Removing of Personal Protective Equipment

- <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/personal-protective-equipment/donning-and-removing-ppe-infection-prevention>

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Please also see MCB/DDS Partnership “Focus” resources:

- Keeping Healthy –When Using Orientation & Mobility Techniques
- Keeping Canes, Visual Aids, Cellphones and Devices Spotless & Sanitized

focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/downloadable-resources--videos.html

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