



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Use and Conservation during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The FDA and the CDC have outlined several conservation strategies ([FDA guidance](#) and [the CDC guidance](#)) based on supply levels to assist health care organizations and personnel in managing items such as surgical masks, surgical and isolation gowns, and surgical suits.

The Academy encourages members to take steps to preserve protective equipment during the COVID-19 outbreak. Hoarding in all its forms must be avoided so that urgently needed medications and supplies are available for our patients and health care responders on the front lines. [To donate PPE](#), please reach out to your closest Office of Emergency Management. The Academy also encourages members to donate [viral transport medium supplies](#).

Use of Physicians' Own PPE (Or Use of Masks from Home)

For dermatologists who are getting redeployed, the Academy agrees with the AMA and the Joint Commission that physicians should be allowed to use PPE from their office or home, if PPE is not being *routinely* supplied by the hospital or care facility. ([Joint commission](#) and [AMA](#) guidance).

Disinfecting PPE:

To seek guidance on ways to disinfect respirators, follow the CDC guidance on ways to decontaminate and reuse filtering facepiece respirators: [the CDC guidance on ways to decontaminate and reuse filtering facepiece respirators](#).

Dermatologists who wish to find additional ways to be helpful may want to engage with local healthcare centers about the possibility of converting phototherapy units to utilize UVC bulbs as a potential way to attempt to decontaminate used PPE. Due to the PPE shortage, these methods warrant consideration, but remain unproven in terms of efficacy at eradicating viral particles and in terms of whether the use of this form of UVC can degrade the integrity of the PPE gear itself. Practices with unused phototherapy units, particularly if near/adjacent/attached to hospitals, could consider discussions with engineering, infection control, and instrument sterilization groups re:

this potential repurposing of units during this period. While preliminary results are promising ¹ ([Hamzavi et al](#)) more data is needed. Also, as a reminder, people should use precaution to ensure they are not exposed to UVC.

References

1. Hamzavi IH, Lyons AB, Kohli I, et al. Ultraviolet germicidal irradiation: possible method for respirator disinfection to facilitate reuse during COVID-19 pandemic. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2020;In press.