

PPE Alternatives and Conservation Ideas

Many practices are working with limited PPE. Here are some suggestions for alternatives and ideas to help conserve PPE.

Helpful links

- AVMA's [Guidelines for use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\) during the COVID-19 pandemic when demand exceeds supply](#)
- FDA [Surgical Mask and Gown Conservation Strategies - Letter to Healthcare Providers](#)

Ideas from our Veterinary Leadership Team

- Make a homemade mask with 2 rubber bands, a piece of paper towel and 2 staples. Some practices are using this method to make masks for clients entering the hospital for euthanasias.
- Regional Manager, Andy Riddick, created [this video](#) about making your own homemade surgical mask.
- Consider switching to cloth masks, surgical gowns, drapes, and even circulating warm-air blankets (where available) which can be laundered and autoclaved repeatedly.
- Cloth masks make excellent surgery masks, and simple soap and water laundering will disinfect (but not sterilize).
- For masks, the team can write their names on them with sharpie and reuse the mask until it becomes wet or soiled.
- Surgery gloves can be cleaned, dried, turned inside out, and autoclaved for 1 additional use, so you can get 2 uses out of each set to extend their lifespan. They really need to be fully dried so they don't stick together before autoclaving. Hang the gloves from a makeshift clothesline to fully dry before they are turned inside out, repackaged in the folded paper they came in, and then autoclaved in a regular peel pack.
- Also, surgical gloves can even be boiled. Once boiled, then pick them up with a sterile instrument, then put into a sterile container and they are sterile.
- Some practices have proposed having the team/ parking lot runners wear kitchen dishwashing gloves instead of exam gloves so they can wash their hands in them and wear the same set long term. Washing the gloves between patients with soap and water for 20 seconds is fully disinfected (albeit not sterile).
- If you have a neighboring hospital that has a gas sterilizer, you can sterilize latex, plastic, etc. Just offer to pay a nominal usage fee (as it costs the user \$ to run it each time).