

PPE RECOMMENDATIONS

Masks

Wear a well-fitting high-quality mask (N95, KN95, KF94, elastomeric) to reduce risk of COVID-19. Always buy from a trusted retailer, preferably directly from the manufacturer or a third-party they specifically recommend.

Amazon and others have been found to sell so-called “KN95” and “KF94” masks that actually provide little filtration, so buyer beware.

The following masks are used by Dr. Hoerger, his family, his research team, and the patients they work with. We usually start with the 3M Aura (fits most) and go bigger or smaller from there. The Aura fits about 80% of people reasonably well, and with this entire combination of masks, about 95% of people would find a good fit.

- Large faces: 3M VFlex
- Medium faces: 3M Aura
- Medium/small faces: VItacore CAN99
- Small faces: 3M VFlex small
- Children’s masks: WellBefore has KN95/KF94 style masks to fit children ages 2 and up

Adults and children can also use “elastomeric” masks, which can be reused hundreds of times and typically provide the best fit. Flo Mask makes these for children and adults, and there are other options.

HEPA Air Purifiers

When buying an air purifier, the key specification is the air cleaning rate, also called the clean air delivery rate (CADR), which is typically measured in cubic feet per minute (CFM). ASHRAE national safety standards recommend about 50 CFM per person for most spaces.

Note that air cleaning is one layer of mitigation and no substitute for masking when in close proximity. Ignore where HEPA companies advertise that their product is great for 1,444 square feet of space or 600 square feet of space; those numbers are meaningless. Find the CADR in CFM, and if they cannot tell you that, buy elsewhere. Also, keep in mind that most HEPA filters will seem “too loud” on their most powerful setting, so take the advertised CADR and divide it by 2 or 3 to get an estimate of what the cleaning rate will be on a more tolerable setting.

Example: Let’s say someone often has 4 people in their living room. They would want about 200 CFM of air cleaning rate (4 people x 50 CFM/person) to help reduce the risk of in-room transmission. Go out and buy a HEPA filter or multiple HEPA filters to achieve an advertised 400-600 CFM (on max setting), knowing this will provide about 200 CFM on a lower setting that is very quiet.

There are many brands, and the prices have come down considerably, so shop around for deals. Airthereal, Coway, and Levoit are among the common brands. Consider these, though step up or down in price and CFM based on needs.

- Airthereal 550: <https://airthereal.com/products/agh550-air-purifier>
- Coway Airmega 400: <https://www.amazon.com/Coway-Airmega-Purifier-sq-ft-White/dp/B01C9RIACG>
- Levoit 300: <https://www.amazon.com/LEVOIT-Purifier-Home-Allergies-Pets/dp/B07VVK39F7>

Additional Resources

- <https://cleanaircrew.org/air-cleaners/>
- <https://www.projectn95.org/collections/air-purification/>

COVID-19 Rapid Tests

In our view, the best COVID-19 rapid test on the market is by far FlowFlex. It outperforms other tests, including those that are often more expensive, such as BinaxNOW. It's what Dr. Hoerger's family, research team, and patients use.

Shop around for deals. Search for coupon codes for discounts or free shipping. If not in a rush, make an account and leave items in the online shopping cart a few days, and sellers will often send discount codes for 5-10% off or free shipping.

Recommended retailers:

- Pharmalynk: <https://store.pharmalynk.com/products/flowflex-covid-19-antigen-rapid-home-test-kit-flash-sale>
- Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Flowflex-Authorized-Self-Test-Non-invasive-Discomfort/dp/B09PZS1N44>
- Local Options: Search Instacart for FlowFlex to see who might have it in stock. Get it delivered, or just go pick it up. If everywhere local is out of FlowFlex, search around for the best nearby deal on other brands. During surges, it can be hard to find any reasonably priced test.
- During Surges: We recommend keeping a "safety stock" of rapid tests on hand for the late-summer and winter waves, as there can be delays finding tests locally or getting them shipped online. If you cannot find FlowFlex, try searching for "On/Go" 1-packs. It's the exact same test, just marketed under a different brand. Note that the On/Go 2-packs have a different manufacturer that has lower reported accuracy, so stick with the 1-packs (it's okay to buy a 12-pack of 1-packs, but just avoid the ones that come two per box). We view the On/Go 2-packs as equivalent to FlowFlex and use them interchangeably.
<https://www.amazon.com/at-Home-COVID-19-Antigen-Self-Test-Authorized/dp/B09RMRXN3H>

Conflicts of Interest

We have no conflicts of interest. These are the products we use, and these recommendations will change if anything better at a fair price comes along. These are unpaid suggestions.