



Using the right personal protective equipment (PPE), including respiratory protective equipment (RPE), will help protect staff, patients and visitors during the pandemic. However, dentists have two important challenges in terms of PPE and COVID-19. The first is sourcing the right gear. The second is getting it correctly fitted.

Here are some things you must know about PPE and fit-testing:

**There is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to Respiratory Protection Equipment (RPE)**

**The six main types of respirators with particle filters are:**

- Disposable half mask/filtering facepiece
- Reusable half mask
- Full face mask
- Powered half mask
- Powered full face mask
- Loose fitting powered facepieces (hoods)

All tight-fitting facepieces (1-5) require fit-testing to ensure an adequate seal. Loose-fitting respirators do not need fit-testing as they do not require a tight seal.

**Most fit-testing relies on your sense of taste**

During the first stage of the most common test, you will be tested for your sensitivity to taste. When fit-testing, you're asked to put a hood over your head and to breathe through your mouth. A specific amount of aerosol is then sprayed into the hood until you signal that you can taste it.

Once you confirm that you can taste the aerosol, the fit-tester records the amount sprayed in and you're allowed to take the hood off. You can drink water (though eat and drink nothing else) and are asked to wait for 30 minutes before the second half of the test.

## **Responsibility lies with both employer and employees**

Remember it's the employer's responsibility to ensure the suitability and adequacy of the RPE. However, employees have a legal duty to use and maintain the RPE following the training and instruction provided and to report any defects or problems immediately. A good fit-tester will support you and your team to keep staff and patients as safe as possible during the ongoing pandemic.

If you need to find someone to provide fit-testing, contact [Acorn Health & Safety Ltd](https://www.acornsafety.co.uk/) for more information.

T: 0117 958 2070	M: 07970708656
W: <a href="https://www.acornsafety.co.uk/">https://www.acornsafety.co.uk/</a>	E: Danny@acornsafety.co.uk

