

Dear Colleagues,

You may have heard that we are expecting shortages of PPE and disposable lab supplies (e.g. pipette tips, other reagents) due to increased demand during the COVID crisis. Of immediate concern is the impending shortage of nitrile gloves, which are the most commonly used type in lab research and patient care. We already see prices and delivery times increasing, and it is highly likely that shortages will worsen and persist well into 2021.

This situation requires us to develop and implement strategies to avoid a breakdown of critical resources that could slow or stop laboratory research.

We are writing with some urgency, and ask you to follow these recommendations:

- **Please use common sense to reduce the number of nitrile gloves used in the lab.** Some ways to do this include:
 - **Plan experiments, tasks, and procedures efficiently** to reduce the demand of gloves. This can be done by combining similar preparatory tasks or tasks that have similar hazards to reduce the need to change out gloves.
 - **Use vinyl gloves.** Vinyl gloves are a good substitute for many lab applications, and are still easier to procure (even though that might change as the situation progresses). While latex gloves are allowable in certain settings, they are generally not recommended as they entail a risk for causing serious allergic reactions.
 - Please review the EH&S Alternative Glove Selection Guidance document (attached) for more information on alternative types of gloves and their recommended use.
- **Plan ahead and keep track of your supplies:** We are *not* suggesting that you rush out and hoard excessive supplies. While tempting, it will not serve the community as a whole, nor will it reflect well on our collective values. However, when ordering gloves, tips, PCR consumables, etc., be aware that delivery times may have increased from weeks to months and plan accordingly. If you need help with identifying or vetting vendors, you may contact Carolyn Place at EH&S.
- **Prioritize experiments in case of a shortage:** Even though it may not become necessary, think about how you would “triage” experiments before you run out of gloves completely. Consider which uses of gloves have the highest priority (for example, you may prefer to postpone some routine lab work in order to secure a supply of gloves for maintaining a critical mouse line).

Emergency Reserve

We will create a limited stock of gloves that can be made accessible if acute shortages arise that threaten critical projects or resources. Contact Daisy Bird (Department of Microbiology & Immunology) with questions.

Importantly, we need your help and community spirit:

- **Be a team player!** Thinking ahead and working together is the best strategy to avert delays or breakdowns in lab or facility operations.
- Do not hoard!
- Be economic with glove use.
- If possible, work temporarily with material that is less convenient than what you are used to.
- Understand that frontline health care workers caring for patients must have priority, even if that may cause difficulties in the labs.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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