ScienceAware

Personal Protective Gear

An essential ingredient in any learning environment is safety. Using the proper personal protective equipment is the sign of a responsible and informed student. Sometimes, even when proper lab/classroom safety procedures are followed, your personal protective gear may be the only thing that keeps you from getting injured.

It's easy to relax your guard when it comes to eye safety. After all, your eyes successfully navigate hazardous situations every day. And if you're not used to wearing glasses, it can be easy to forget to put them on. Splashing chemicals, flying objects, and sharp instruments all pose a constant hazard in the science lab and your eyes can easily be at risk.

Even if you are extra careful, lab partners, other students and other activities nearby can put your eyes at risk. Don't take a chance. Eye protection is a must! Wear your protective eyewear.

Don't forget about protecting other parts of your body, too. Besides acting as a shield between your hands and hazardous materials, some gloves can also absorb perspiration and protect the hands from heat. Some glove types can dissolve when in contact with solvents. Ensure you match the protective glove with the nature of the task. Before using, inspect your gloves for punctures, tears, or holes. Lab coats and aprons serve to protect clothing and skin from chemicals that may be spilled or splashed. Both are best if they are knee length and fit well.

Many lab experiments, whether done properly or improperly, can give off noxious fumes and contaminants. Respiratory protection is essential when there's potential for harmful fumes. Respirators come in a range of devices from a disposable mask to a self-contained breathing apparatus.