

## GLOVES DIFFERENCES:

# How to Choose

When buying disposable gloves, there are many different options available to suit different needs. The level of protection, comfort, durability and more all vary between the types of gloves, which include latex gloves, nitrile gloves and vinyl gloves. With so many choices, the decision can get overwhelming, so let's break it down and get an idea of why there are so many different types, to begin with. Once you understand this, the process of choosing gloves will be much easier.

## Glove Types

---

Medical gloves are usually made from polymers such as latex, vinyl and nitrile, although you may find disposable gloves made of other materials, such as neoprene. The following is a quick comparison of nitrile vs. latex vs. vinyl gloves, including the differences in design and their unique benefits.

GLOVE TYPE	DEFINITION	ADVANTAGE	PROTECTION LEVEL
Latex Gloves	Made of natural rubber	Highest comfort, flexibility, fit and tactile sensitivity	Bacteria, viruses
Nitrile Gloves	Made of synthetic material	Stretchy, durable	Chemicals, viruses
Vinyl Gloves	Made of synthetic material, sometimes referred to as synthetic	Cost-efficient synthetic option, comfortable	Chemicals

### *Latex Gloves vs. Latex-free Gloves*

---

Latex gloves are often preferred by healthcare providers since they provide the best service when it comes to elasticity, comfort and fit. Surgeons in particular benefit from latex gloves since they are great for sensitive work, since they offer more precision with high tactile sensitivity.

Despite its advantages, latex gloves have become an issue for many health professionals due to the increasing rate of latex allergies, and many are choosing to go with non-latex glove options such as vinyl and nitrile gloves instead.

Vinyl gloves, which are made from PVC (polyvinyl chloride), are usually the cheapest latex-free gloves. However, many prefer to use higher-end gloves such as nitrile gloves. Nitrile gloves are often preferred

since these non-latex gloves best resemble the stretchy feel of latex gloves, and are also highly durable and puncture resistant.

Another difference to consider when deciding between latex and latex-free gloves is the protection offered by each type of material. In general, latex gloves offer the best protection against bacteria and viruses, while synthetic gloves provide better chemical protection. Of the different types of latex-free gloves, nitrile gloves offer a higher degree of protection against viruses, besides the chemical protection they provide.

## Glove Options

---

Now that we have a better understanding of the different materials of disposable gloves and their individual advantages, let's explore the more specific options available. Each one of these options is intended to provide specific benefits for different uses. In order to choose the right glove type for the intended use, it's important to understand what these advantages are.

GLOVE OPTION	EXPLANATION	ADVANTAGE
Powdered Gloves	Gloves that are powdered, often with cornstarch	Enhanced ease of donning due to powder
Powder-free Gloves	Gloves that have had powder coating removed	Reduced allergic reaction, cleaner to use
Chlorinated Gloves	Powder-free gloves treated with chlorine	Easy donning, particle-free to prevent allergic reactions
Non-chlorinated Gloves	Powder-free gloves with a coating of gel/silicone particles	Neutral color, odor-free, longer shelf life
Examination Gloves	Sterile or non-sterile medical grade gloves	Provides protection against blood or bodily fluid exposure
Surgical Gloves	Usually sterile, high quality medical grade gloves	Provides high-quality protection against blood or bodily fluid exposure

Chemo Gloves	Gloves that are tested and approved for use with chemotherapy drugs	Provides protection against chemotherapy drug exposure
Gloves with Aloe	Gloves with a coating of organic aloe	Moisturizes hands during use
Gloves with Oatmeal	Gloves with colloidal oatmeal	Prevents and protects dry skin

---

### *Powdered Gloves vs. Powder-free Gloves*

Powder-free gloves can be more expensive due to the process that needs to be done to remove the powder coating from the glove. However, gloves that are powder-free reduce the cause of allergies by lowering protein and chemical content. In addition, powder-free gloves are ‘cleaner’ to use than powdered gloves, since they don’t leave any residue on clothing or other surfaces.

Powdered gloves are usually lubricated with cornstarch, which makes them much easier to put on. Cornstarch coatings have replaced other powdering options such as lycopodium powder and talc because these other coating types have been found to irritate tissue. Nevertheless, even cornstarch can impede healing when coming into contact with tissues, so powder-free gloves are often preferred for surgeries and other sensitive procedures.

---

### *Examination Gloves vs. Surgical Gloves*

Both surgical and exam gloves are medical-grade gloves for use during medical procedures.

Medical exam gloves can be used for patient examinations and blood tests. These gloves are also used as general purpose gloves for [managing incontinence](#), everyday spills and messes in and around the home. Surgical gloves are used by surgeons and operating room nurses. These disposable gloves must meet higher quality standards, and are usually sterile since they are used for surgical procedures. Surgical gloves offer better fit with more precise sizing, as well as higher tactile sensitivity.