

Do's & Don'ts

For wearing N95 respirators in non-surgical healthcare settings



N95 respirator

Tight-fitting cover that when properly fitted to the face protects the wearer from very small particles that float in the air, such as TB, measles, and chickenpox. It should fit the face tightly with no gapping. An N95 respirator is intended to provide more protection than a procedure mask by blocking at least 95 percent of very small (0.3 microns) particles. It is important to note that not all N95 respirators are tested for fluid resistance to be used as surgical N95s in the perioperative setting.

The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) may update guidance related to masks as emerging pathogens arise and new recommendations are developed.

Be on the lookout for updates by visiting the OSHA website or consult your facility's infection prevention or occupational health department.

Learn more: www.osha.gov/SLTC/respiratoryprotection/guidance.html

Do

- ✓ Check to make sure the N95 respirator has no defects such as holes or torn straps.
- ✓ Wear for protection against very small particles that float in the air (e.g., TB, measles, or chickenpox).
- ✓ Follow manufacturer's instructions for donning and doffing of N95 respirator.
- ✓ Ensure proper fit—making sure nose and mouth are completely covered. The N95 respirator must have a complete seal all around. Complete face seal check after donning the respirator.
- ✓ Mold the respirator over the bridge of your nose when putting it on to help keep the N95 respirator on and fitting properly. It is also helpful to press all around the face seal to be sure it is tightly in place.
- ✓ Tilt head forward and remove the N95 respirator by pulling bottom strap over back of head, followed by the top strap without touching the front of mask. Keep straps tight during the removal process.
- ✓ Discard an N95 respirator by touching straps only. Perform hand hygiene before and after use of an N95 respirator or any type of personal protective equipment, such as your gloves and gown.
- ✓ Remove the N95 respirator when no longer in clinical space and the patient intervention is complete.

Don't

- ✗ DON'T wear if wet or soiled; get a new N95 respirator.
- ✗ DON'T reuse; toss it after wearing once.
- ✗ DON'T let patients or visitors wear N95 respirators unless they've been fit tested to wear them.
- ✗ DON'T wear an N95 respirator that hasn't been properly fit tested. Proper fit is essential.
- ✗ DON'T use the N95 respirator if air leaks around the respirator edges.
- ✗ DON'T touch the front of the N95 respirator as it is contaminated after use. DON'T snap the straps, as that may spread germs.
- ✗ DON'T share your N95 respirator with others; germs can spread that way.
- ✗ DON'T leave an N95 respirator hanging around your neck.

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RESOURCES

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL), "Respirator Trusted-Source Information," Last updated: 6/12/15. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/respusers.html>.

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The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, "How to Properly Put On and Take Off a Disposable Respirator," February, 2010. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-133/>.

www.apic.org/InfectionPreventionandYou

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