

Due to global shortage of N95 respirators, national organizations are revising protocols on usage and fit testing.

OSHA Suspends Annual N95 Respirator Fit Testing

Occupational Health and Safety Association (OSHA) is recommending health care providers, conserve supplies of N95 respirators while continuing to protect their team members. The conservation measures suggested by OSHA include:

- Informing team members initial **and** annual fit testing of N95 respirators **is being suspended** in order to preserve and prioritize the supply of respirators;
- Explaining to team members the importance of performing a user seal check (i.e., a fit check) at each donning to make sure they are getting an adequate seal from their respirator; and,
- Reminding workers that they should inform their supervisor if the integrity and/or fit of their N95 respirator is compromised.

Guidance for Reuse of N95 Respirators and Face shields or Goggles

Our overarching priority when caring for patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 is to keep our patients and team members safe. Due to national shortages of N95 respirators, face shields and Goggles, **reuse protocols** to conserve supplies while ensuring team members are protected. As COVID-19 cases increase in our region and due to supply chain constraints, it is essential to reserve N95 respirators for high risk procedures or settings.

These recommendations are temporary while there are national shortages of N95 respirators and face shields/Goggles. These items can be re-used to conserve supplies and ensure our team members have access to the necessary supplies to perform patient care safely.

Guiding Principles:

- There is **no** change to the existing use guidelines for N95 respirators (see page 4).
- Guidance is for reuse by a single person (no sharing).
- N95 respirators are only to be used by team members entering rooms of COVID-19 positive or PUI patients who are critically ill or receiving aerosolized generating procedures.
- Limit room traffic by ensuring that only those essential for patient care enter the room; strategies include bundling of care, and use of telemedicine as much as possible.

Instructions for reuse of N95 respirators and face shields/Goggles

- Donning
 - Label N95 respirator prior to first use with name and date.
 - Don the N95 respirator
 - Perform a fit and seal check:
 - Place both hands completely over donned respirator and exhale.
 - If air leaks around nose, use both hands to mold the nose piece to the shape of your nose.
 - If air leaks at the edges, adjust straps alongside of your head.
 - Repeat fit check.
 - If air still leaks then discard N95.
 - Cover the N95 respirator
 - Place a procedural **or** surgical mask over the N95 respirator.
 - Put on eye protection – reusable face shield or Goggles.
 - During patient care, DO NOT TOUCH your masks or eye protection.

- Doffing
 - In the patient's room, ONLY remove gown then gloves.
 - Perform hand hygiene.
 - Exit patient room.
 - Put on a clean pair of gloves.
 - Clean a surface top using a PDI Super Sani (Purple Top) wipe with a 2 minute contact/dwell time.
 - Remove face shield or goggles and disinfect with a PDI Super Sani and then place on cleaned surface.
 - Remove the procedure mask covering the N95 and discard.
 - The front is potentially contaminated, so remove by holding the ear loops.
 - Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene
 - Remove N95 respirator.
 - Visually inspect for contamination, distortion in shape/form. If contaminated/wet, creased or bent, N95 should be discarded.
 - Store N95, face shield and goggles in separate paper bags in a **secure location** with the user name and date (do not take N95s, face shields or goggles home)
 - Perform hand hygiene.

Process to re-use your disposable N95 respirator:

- Remove N95 mask from paper storage bag and visually inspect for distortion. If creased or bent do not re-use.
- Perform hand hygiene and follow donning instructions above.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/pandemic-planning.html>

This document was adapted from Guidance for Extended Use and Reuse of Facemasks, Respirators, and Protective Eyewear, University of Maryland.

Universal Masking: Surgical Mask and N95 Respirator Guidelines

Scenario 1: Hospital and Ambulatory Guidelines for Caregivers Directly Involved in the Care of **Confirmed COVID-19** patients or **COVID-19 Patients Under Investigation (PUI)**

Surgical Masks	N95 Respirator
Caregivers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for non-critically ill COVID-19 patients • Transporting COVID-19 patients 	Caregivers caring for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically ill COVID-19 patients requiring ICU care, regardless of location • COVID-19 patients who need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aerosol-generated procedures ○ Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
Surgical mask and N95s must be worn with face shields to protect eye exposures. Gown and gloves are also required for contact precautions. *COVID-19 includes both confirmed positive patients as well as PUIs.	

Scenario 2: Hospital and Ambulatory Guidelines for Team Members who work at a **Patient Care Location** (e.g. hospital, physician practice, etc.)

Surgical Masks Usage	N95 Respirators Usage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All team members are to wear a surgical mask. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to be used

Scenario 3: Hospital and Ambulatory Guidelines for Masking Patients

Surgical Masks	N95 Respirator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-critically ill COVID-19 patients • Patients exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms • Patients exhibiting any respiratory symptoms, GI symptoms, or fever • Immunocompromised patients (e.g. transplant patients, oncology patients) • Pregnant outpatients 	Not to be used.

Surgical Mask Guidelines

Effective March 20, 2020, all team members who work in a patient care location are to wear a surgical mask. Please follow these guidelines:

- Replace your surgical mask if it gets wet or soiled.
- If you need to unmask while caring for a COVID-19 positive patient or a COVID-19 patient under investigation (PUI), save your mask. Follow the proper donning and doffing PPE procedure (including discarding the surgical mask you placed while caring for that patient) and then redon your original mask.
- When eating, remove your mask and keep it clean. Redon your mask once you finish eating. If eating in the cafeteria, practice social distancing while your mask is off.
- Wear your mask throughout your shift (when eating, please follow the procedure outlined above).
- Discard your surgical mask when you leave your workplace. Do not take the surgical mask home.

Infection Prevention at Home

When leaving work follow these guidelines to help prevent germ exposure:

- If working at a patient care location, discard of your surgical mask when you leave work. Do not take the surgical mask home.
- Change out of your scrubs or clothes when you arrive home is a best practice. Washing your scrubs or clothes with regular laundry detergent is sufficient.
- Practice proper hand hygiene at home.