

CDC Recommended Guidance on N95 Respirator Reuse and Extended Use During Outbreaks

During a pandemic or widespread outbreak of a novel infectious disease, supplies of N95 respirators can become depleted. In these cases, CDC has guidelines for safe reuse and extended use of N95 mask. As long as guidelines for safe handling and storage are followed and the mask allows for comfortable breathing by the user, a single N95 may be worn for extended time, may be reused and may be used for care of multiple patients.



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Key Points

N95 masks may be used until damaged, breathing becomes difficult or they become contaminated with blood or bodily fluids. Key points for reuse/extended use include:

- Minimize unnecessary contact with the respirator surface.
- Strictly adhere to hand hygiene practices.
- Follow proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) donning and doffing technique.
- In the case of COVID-19, eye protection (i.e., goggles or face shields) will be worn to minimize surface contamination. Eye protection is NOT required for other airborne diseases (TB, measles, etc).



Procedure for Donning, Removing and Discarding PPE

To put on PPE

- Wash/sanitize hands (using gel or soap and water) prior putting on PPE.
- Put on gown and a pair of clean (non-sterile) gloves prior to donning N95 mask and eye protection (if needed).
- Don N95 respirator, taking care not to touch the surface of the mask. Don eye protection last (only if needed).
- Remove gloves and wash/sanitize hands.
- Make any adjustments needed to mask/eye protection.
- Wash/sanitize hands.
- Don new gloves for patient care.

**DO NOT TOUCH
YOUR MASK OR FACE SHIELD
WHILE IN THE ROOM!**

To remove PPE

- Remove your gloves and gown in the room and dispose.
- Wash/sanitize hands (in room, if possible).
- Outside of room, remove your eye protection (if worn) and wipe with disinfectant. Wash/sanitize hands.
- Remove N95 mask being sure to avoid touching the inside or surface of the mask.
**IF CONTAMINATED,
DISPOSE IN TRASH!**
- Place mask in a clean paper bag, clearly labeled with your name, between uses.
- Wash/sanitize hands.

When to discard N95

- When used during aerosol generating procedures (i.e., intubation, bronchoscopy, etc).
- When contaminated with blood, bodily fluids or respiratory secretions from patients.
- Following close contact with any patient co-infected with an infectious disease requiring contact precautions (if mask touched during care or eye protection not used).