

Process for Extended Use and Reuse of Respiratory PPE

Purpose

The pandemic has led to crisis and near-crisis situations where contingency plans are required to optimize the availability and use of PPE. This document outlines the practice for reuse and extended use of face masks and respirators.

Definitions

Extended Use: The practice of wearing the same respiratory PPE for repeated encounters with several patients, without removing the respiratory PPE between encounters.

Respiratory PPE: Personal protective equipment which covers the user's mouth and nose and is designed to provide control of respiratory particles from user and/or protect the user from contact with potential infectious particles (e.g., face masks, respirators)

Reuse: The practice of using the same respiratory PPE for multiple encounters with patients but removing it ('doffing') after each encounter. The respirator is stored in between encounters to be put on again ('donned') prior to the next need for use of respiratory PPE.

Guidelines

1. Respiratory PPE may be reused for patients requiring airborne or COVID isolation precautions. They are dedicated for reuse by one healthcare staff only.
2. During respirator reuse, the user should ensure the respirator is well sealed to the face prior to entering a patient's room.
3. Discard respiratory PPE when:
 - a. Potentially contaminated with patient's blood, respiratory secretions, or other bodily fluids.
 - b. If damaged, soiled or hard to breathe through.
 - c. Despite adjustment to the nasal bridge and elastic straps, does not fit well.
4. Respiratory PPE should be discarded at the end of the user's shift. Face masks used solely in non-clinical areas face masks may be used until they are soiled or visibly damaged.
5. Perform hand hygiene
 - a. Before and after touching or adjusting respiratory PPE (if necessary for comfort or to maintain fit).
 - b. If inadvertent contact is made with the outside of the respiratory PPE.

Process for reuse of disposable N95 respirators

6. Prior to reuse:
 - a. Inspect for damage (ensure intact and shape maintained, straps not stretched out, nosepiece intact)
 - b. Don respirator and conduct a seal check (wearing clean gloves,

- cover mask surface with hands and inhale/exhale gently.
 - c. Perform hand hygiene before entering a patient room.
7. For storage after a patient encounter:
- a. Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene
 - b. Remove the respirator by grasping the bottom strap of the respirator and pulling it over your head, then grasp the top strap and pull it over your head.
 - c. Place in a paper bag labeled with the user's name in a manner to ensure it does not become damaged or deformed.

Process for extended use of respiratory PPE

- 8. Respiratory PPE can be worn throughout shift while caring for multiple patients as long as it maintains its fit and function.
- 9. If need to doff during the shift, follow process for reuse.

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