

Process for Extended Use and Reuse of Respirators

Purpose

This document outlines the practice for reuse and extended use of N95 respirators.

Definitions

Reuse - The practice of using the same N95 respirator 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 encounter with a patient.

Extended Use - The practice of wearing the same N95 respirator for repeated encounters with several patients, without removing the respirator between encounters.

Guidelines

- N95 respirators may be reused for patients requiring airborne or COVID isolation precautions. They are dedicated for reuse by one healthcare provider only.
- During reuse, the user should ensure the respirator is well sealed to the face prior to entering a patient's room.
- **Discard** N95 respirator when:
 - Contaminated with patient's blood, respiratory secretions, or other bodily fluids.
 - If damaged or hard to breathe through.
 - Despite adjustment to the nasal bridge and elastic straps does not seal well to face.
- **Depending upon usage respirators may be used for up to one week.**
- Perform **hand hygiene**
 - Before and after touching or adjusting the respirator (if necessary for comfort or to maintain fit).
 - If inadvertent contact is made with the outside of the respirator.

Process for reuse

- **Prior to reuse**, use a clean pair of gloves to:
 - Inspect for damage (ensure intact and shape maintained, straps not stretched out, nosepiece intact)
 - Don respirator and conduct a seal check (wearing clean gloves, cover mask surface with hands and inhale/exhale gently).
 - Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene and put on a clean pair of gloves before entering patient room.
- **For storage** after a patient encounter:
 - Don a clean pair of gloves, remove the respirator by grasping the bottom strap of the N95 and pulling it over your head, then grasp the top strap and pull it over your head.
 - Place in a paper bag labeled with the user's name in a manner to ensure they do not become damaged or deformed.

Process for extended use

- Respirator to be donned at the beginning of the shift
- Respirator can be worn throughout shift while caring for multiple patients as long as it maintains fit and function.
- If need to doff during the shift, follow process for reuse.