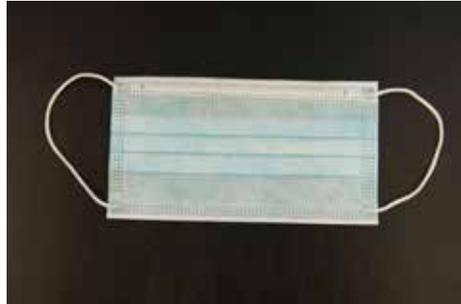


10. Respiratory Protection Program

In health care there are two main types of respiratory protection. The best choice depends on the risk assessment of the exposure.

Procedure mask:



Procedure masks are worn by health care workers as protective barriers in situations requiring Droplet Precautions or if there is risk of splashes or sprays to oral and nasal mucous membranes. Procedure masks are also used as a barrier in stopping the transmission of respiratory pathogens.

Procedure masks can be offered to people coming into the Health Care Centre with uncontrolled coughs and sneezes to reduce the risk of transmission to other people who come within 2 metres (6 feet).

N95 respirator:



The N95 respirator is worn for respiratory protection where Airborne Precautions are required.

A fit tested N95 respirator is required to protect the airways of the health care provider. It is intended to seal tightly to the face and filters small airborne particles that float in the air preventing them from being inhaled.

A fit tested N95 respirator should be worn by the health care workers when:

- The patient has a diagnosis or symptoms of an Airborne infection (e.g. tuberculosis, chickenpox, measles and herpes zoster)
- Performing aerosolizing procedures with a patient with a Droplet infection (e.g. open suctioning or nebulized medications)
- Directed by public health officials due to a new or emerging disease.

The N95 fit testing program must include:

- A health assessment – to ensure the HCW is able to tolerate wearing the respirator
- N95 respirator fit-testing - to ensure the proper respirator is determined
- Training – health care providers and other staff required to wear an N95 respirator must be educated regarding the proper way to perform a seal-check and to be aware that this is to be done each time she/he wears a N95 respirator.

Both the mask and the respirator are disposable and should never be worn around your neck.

The outside surface is contaminated once it has been used and when touched for removal.

A supply of N95 respirators in the models and sizes that the staff have been fit tested for must be available.

Discard used respirators into garbage container on leaving the Airborne Precaution area. Perform hand hygiene immediately after mask removal.

Seal-checking (also referred to as a 'fit-check') is a procedure that the health care provider must perform each time an N95 respirator is worn to ensure the respirator is placed on the their face correctly.

N95 respirator failure is usually due to poor fit and leakage around the face seal. Assuring a good fit through an approved fit-testing program and performing a seal-check each time a respirator is used are essential to ensure full protection.

Doing the Seal Check:

To do the seal check, the health care worker, after putting on the respirator and adjusting it, lays her hands gently on the surface of the respirator. When she breathes in and out there should be no air leakage felt around the respirator edges and the surface of the respirator should move slightly in and out with each inhalation and exhalation.

See: Community Health Nursing Administration Manual 2011, 10-005

[See: Canadian Tuberculosis Standards 2013](#)



