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## PARTNERS INFECTION CONTROL GUIDANCE ON EXTENDED USE AND REUSE OF N95 RESPIRATORS, SURGICAL MASKS, PROCEDURAL MASKS, AND EYE PROTECTION

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*This document supersedes all prior guidance.*

Summary of March 24, 2020 changes:

- Clarified that N95 respirators only need to be used during aerosol generating procedures on patients **with suspected viral respiratory syndromes**.
- Clarified that extended use of N95s worn during aerosol generating procedures in patients **with** suspected viral respiratory syndromes is permitted but the mask should be discarded when removed. If an N95 is used during an aerosol generating procedure on patients **without** suspected respiratory viral syndromes it can continue to be used, even for multiple days, until it is soiled, contaminated, or damaged.
- Added instructions on provider actions should they touch their N95 respirator, surgical mask, or procedural mask.

### **Background**

Partners Infection Control Leaders have invoked extended use and reuse requirements for all N95 respirators, surgical masks, and procedural masks in order to conserve these critical items while still protecting healthcare workers from respiratory infections.

- N95 respirators are used for providers caring for patients under Airborne Infection Isolation (“negative pressure”), during aerosol-generating procedures on patients with suspected viral respiratory syndromes (see Partners Infection Control List of Aerosol Generating Procedures in Policy Central under Covid-19 Domain), and when obtaining NP swabs. A negative pressure room is not required for obtaining NP swabs.
- Surgical and procedural masks are used for patients on Droplet Isolation.
- Eye protection (face-shields and goggles) is used for patients on Droplet Isolation and Strict Isolation.

### **N95 Respirator, Surgical Mask, and Procedural Mask Guidance**

All healthcare workers using N95 respirators, surgical masks, and procedural masks to care for patients must extend the use of their inventory as follows:

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1. Extended use (wearing N95 respirators, surgical, and procedural masks without removal or redonning between patients) is allowed if the N95 respirator, surgical, or procedural mask has not been soiled, contaminated or damaged.
  - a. Extended use of N95 respirators is allowed after aerosol generating procedures in patients **with** suspected viral respiratory syndromes, but the N95 should be discarded after being removed. There is no need to discard the N95 if it was used during aerosol generating procedures in patients **without** suspected respiratory viral syndromes.
2. Reuse (removal and reuse of N95 respirators, surgical, and procedural masks between patients) is allowed if the N95 respirator, surgical, or procedural mask, has not been soiled, contaminated, or damaged.
  - a. If an N95 respirator was used in an aerosol-generating procedure in a patient **with** a suspected viral respiratory syndrome, the N95 should not be reused.
  - b. An N95 respiratory may be reused if it was used in aerosol-generating procedures in patients **without** suspected respiratory viral syndromes.
3. Extended use is preferred over reuse.
4. If an N95 respirator, surgical mask, or procedural mask is touched by the provider while in use, with or without gloves, the provider must change their gloves (if worn) and perform hand hygiene.
5. Prior to removing the N95 respirator, surgical, or procedural mask, perform hand hygiene.
6. The removed N95 respirator, surgical, or procedural mask should be placed in a designated receptacle for reuse (ex: paper tray, paper bag, or emesis basin, labeled with provider's name).
  - a. Perform hand hygiene immediately after putting on or otherwise touching a reused respirator or mask
  - b. Keep the N95 respirator, surgical, or procedural mask in a separate receptacle from the eye protection.
7. N95 respirator, surgical, and procedural masks must be worn by a single wearer.
8. Surgical and procedural masks should be used for a maximum of one shift.
9. N95 respirators can be used for multiple shifts so long as they have not been soiled, contaminated, damaged, or used during an aerosol-generating procedure in a patient **with** a suspected respiratory viral syndrome.
10. Under conditions of extended use or reuse, a face shield is preferentially worn over the N95 respirator, surgical mask, or procedural mask as the form of eye protection in order to protect the mask. The face-shield must be cleaned and reused per the guidance below.

**Procedure for Donning Reused N95 respirator, surgical, or procedural mask**

1. Perform hand hygiene
2. Put on clean gloves
3. Put on N95 respirator, surgical, or procedural mask, taking care to avoid touching face or eyes
4. Perform seal check (for N95)
5. Discard gloves and perform hand hygiene

**References:**

CDC Recommended Guidance for Extended Use and Limited Reuse of N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators in Healthcare Settings

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

CDC Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of Facemasks

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html>

**Eye Protection Guidance**

All healthcare workers using eye protection in the form of face shields or goggles to care for patients must reuse these supplies as follows:

1. Extended use (wearing eye protection without removal or redonning between patients) and reuse (removal and reuse of eye protection between patients) are required if the face shield or goggles have not been soiled, contaminated or damaged.
2. Extended use is preferred over reuse.
3. Eye protection should be cleaned when visibly soiled and after removal.
4. Eye protection must be worn by a single wearer
  - a. Label the face shield or goggles with name of the user with a marker (not a sticker).
5. The removed and cleaned eye protection should be placed in a designated receptacle for reuse (ex: paper tray, paper bag, emesis basin, labeled with provider's name).
  - a. Perform hand hygiene immediately after putting on or otherwise touching reused eye protection
  - b. Keep the eye protection in a separate receptacle from the N95 respirator, surgical, or procedural mask
6. All eye protection, including disposable face-shields, goggles, and personal reusable goggles must be used without time limit and cleaned and stored according to the procedure below as long as they are not damaged and retain their structural integrity.
7. Personal glasses are never suitable for eye protection.

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### **Procedure for Cleaning Eye Protection**

1. Perform hand hygiene
2. Don a clean pair of gloves
3. Carefully wipe the outside of the eye protection using hospital-approved alcohol-based wipes and allow to dry (e.g. WIPES ALCOHOL #CSWA004, PS#540464).
4. Allow to air dry
5. Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.

### **References:**

CDC Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of Eye Protection

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/eye-protection.html>

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