

Extended Use and Re-Use of Masks & N95 Respirators

Extended Use: Using a mask/respirator for repeated close contact encounters with several patients, without removing between encounters. Once removed, discard item.

Re-use/limited reuse: Using a mask/respirator for multiple patient encounters but removing only to eat such as break or lunch and re-donning it prior to reentering patient care area. If not contaminated, can be re-used.

Surgical Mask – Extended Use: Two masks allocated per shift

- A surgical mask can be used over the course of many patients, regardless of precautions
- Can be used as long as possible, but once wet, damaged, soiled, or difficult to breathe through it should be disposed of
- Take care not to touch the mask, and if you do, immediately perform hand hygiene
- Take extra care when removing this mask as this is when self-contamination may occur

Surgical Mask – Re-Use:

- Consider re-use when performing activities with low transmission risk (e.g. dispensing medication or delivering meals), which do not create a risk to the staff member or patient
- Mask should be carefully removed and then folded so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage
- Folded masks should be stored in a way that keeps them clean, dry, and protected
- Care must be taken to ensure each mask is labelled for a specific staff member
- If the mask becomes contaminated, remove and discard it

N95 Respirator – Extended Use: One mask allocated per shift

- N95 respirators can be worn for each 12 hours shift and can be used as long as possible, but once wet, damaged, soiled, or difficult to breathe through, it should be disposed of
- Wear a face shield over the N95 respirator to reduce surface contamination. Face shields must be disposed after the patient care interaction if soiled or contaminated outside of the patient care environment, otherwise can remain in place.
- Take care not to touch the respirator; if you do, immediately perform hand hygiene

N95 Respirator – Re-Use:

- Wear a face shield over the N95 to reduce surface contamination of the N95. Face shields must be disposed after the patient care interaction if soiled or contaminated, outside of the patient care environment, otherwise can remain in place.
- Use the respirator for multiple patient encounters, removing only to eat such as break or lunch and re-donning it prior to re-entering patient care area. Practice good hand hygiene. If not contaminated, can be re-used.
- Discard N95 respirators once wet, damaged, soiled, or difficult to breathe through,
- N95s must be stored in a way that keeps them clean, dry, and not crushed or folded
- Care must be taken to ensure each N95 is labelled for a specific staff member
- Avoid touching the inside of the respirator. If inadvertent contact occurs, discard the respirator and perform hand hygiene
- Use a pair of clean (non-sterile) gloves when donning a used N95 respirator and perform a user seal check. Discard gloves after the N95 has been re-donned and a fit check has been completed, perform hand hygiene