Guidelines for the Limited Reuse and Extended Use of N-95 Respirators

Managing the use of N-95 respirators Limited and Extended Use as detailed below:

1. The respirator should only be worn and/or reused by a single wearer
   a. It can be worn between patients
   b. And while in the corridor in the patient care unit
   c. To minimize contamination
      i. Avoid removing or touching the front of the mask, or touching the inside of the mask

2. Consider use of a cleanable face shield (preferred) over an N95 respirator and/or other steps (e.g., masking patients, use of engineering controls such as screens and curtains) to reduce surface contamination

3. Discard N95 respirators following use during aerosol generating procedures

4. If the respirator becomes contaminated, it should be discarded.
   a. This may be difficult for the wearer to discern. Healthcare personnel should be aware that even if not visibly soiled, the external surface of the respirator is considered to be contaminated, both outside and inside. Consider the following when determining if the mask should be replaced:
      i. Grossly contaminated with the blood/body fluids, respiratory secretions
      ii. Damaged (e.g., creased, torn, or saturated)
      iii. If breathing through the device becomes difficult

5. Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the respirator (if necessary for comfort or to maintain fit)

6. Extending the use of the mask
   a. The number times a single mask can be removed and replaced is a maximum of five times
   b. Practice appropriate hand hygiene before and after removal of the respirator and, if necessary and possible, appropriately disinfect the object used to shield it
   c. Use a pair of clean (non-sterile) gloves when donning a used N95 respirator and performing a user seal check. Discard gloves after the N95 respirator is donned and any adjustments are made to ensure the respirator is sitting comfortably on your face with a good seal
      i. After removal, mask storage
         1. Short term storage (e.g., minutes to take a break)
            • Ensure the mask does not get contaminated or damaged, ensure your mask is labeled with your name (e.g., piece of paper with your mask on it)
            • Disinfect any surface where the mask was temporarily stored
            • Ideally use a paper bag as detailed below
ii. Long term storage

2. The respirator should be stored in a clean, dry location that prevents it from becoming contaminated and maintains its physical and functional integrity
   - Store the respirator in a breathable container, such as a paper bag, or hang the respirator in a designated area
   - If the respirator is to be stored in a container, the container/bag should be labeled with the user’s name
   - The container/bag is a single use item because the inside can become contaminated due to storing a used respirator; therefore, the container/bag should be discarded after the respirator is re-donned.
   - Consider labeling the respirator with the user’s name to prevent staff from reusing another’s respirator; labeling should be written on the straps whenever feasible to prevent damage to the respirator

3. The respirator should be inspected before each use to ensure its physical integrity is intact and a seal-check should be performed by the healthcare personnel to ensure an adequate fit

References

