

Use of an N95 Respirator: Cleaning Up After the Flood

What is an N95 Respirator?



N95 respirators decrease the risk of breathing in very small particles in the air caused by sweeping, sawing, and mold removal. The respirator must

have a tight seal against your face so that most of the air you inhale goes through the respirator to correctly protect you.

N95 respirators will not protect against chemicals or gases in the air, such as carbon monoxide. If you smell any chemical odors, leave the area right away.

What is the difference between a respirator and a surgical mask?



Respirators are not the same as surgical masks. Surgical masks do not protect against breathing in very small particles such as dust or mold because they do not

fit tightly to the face, allowing air particles to leak in around the edge of the mask.

Other types of masks, such as dust masks, that appear similar to respirators may not be designed to protect the wearer from airborne hazards such as mold and should not be used for this purpose.

When should I wear an N95 respirator?

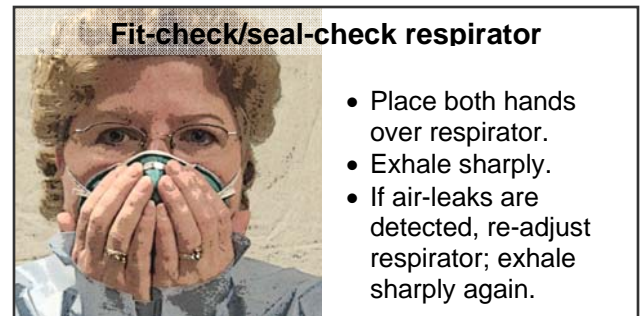
Wear a respirator when you are doing anything that creates a lot of dust (e.g. sweeping, using power saws, shoveling debris, or cleaning up mold). You usually do not need to wear a respirator inside a home or building unless you are doing these types of activities.

Where can I purchase respirators?

You can buy N95 respirators in safety supply stores and in most home improvement and hardware stores. Look for the term "N95" printed on the respirator or packaging.

How to use an N95 respirator:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions on the package for putting on the respirator and getting a tight seal; it must be worn correctly to provide protection.
- After the respirator is on and formed to your face, check the fit of the respirator.



Fit-check/seal-check respirator

- Place both hands over respirator.
- Exhale sharply.
- If air-leaks are detected, re-adjust respirator; exhale sharply again.

- If air leaks are present, readjust the nosepiece, straps and secure the respirator to your face; check the fit again.
- The respirator will not work if air leaks around the sides.
- Take the respirator off when you have completed your task.
- Clean your hands after removing the respirator.
- Hang it to dry in a clean area so it will not be crushed.
 - You can re-use the respirator unless it is damaged or you cannot get a tight seal when it is reused.
- Disposable respirators cannot be cleaned by washing, they must be disposed of when you can no longer get a tight seal.
- Used respirators can be disposed of in the regular trash.

Tips for using respirators:

- Respirators do not fit everyone.
- Beards or other facial hair may prevent the respirator from fitting properly.
- People with chronic heart or lung conditions (e.g. congestive heart disease, asthma) should consult their health care provider before using a respirator.
- If you have trouble breathing or have any other trouble when wearing a respirator for clean-up work, stop working and contact a healthcare provider.