

General Instructions for Disposable Respirators

This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

N95 respirators are designed to protect you from breathing in very small particles that may contain viruses. These types of respirators fit tightly to the face so that air is inhaled through the filter material. N95 respirators should be worn only once and then thrown away in the trash.

Manufacturers supply important instructions with respirators on how they are to be put on and checked to make sure they're properly positioned. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions, specific to the product you're using.

Here are some general instructions:

- Wash your hands prior to handling the respirator and inspect the respirator for tears or damage. If your respirator is folded, open the folds fully.
- Place the respirator on your face with the nosepiece at your fingertips, allowing the headbands to hang freely below your hand.
- Position the respirator with the nosepiece up. Pull the top strap over your head, resting it high at the back of your head. Pull the bottom strap over your head and position it around the neck and below the ears. Be sure not to criss-cross the straps. If there is only one headband, it should rest high at the back of your head. Make sure that your mouth and nose are covered by the respirator.
- If the nosepiece has a metal nose strip, use both hands to mold the nose strip to the shape of your nose.
- Next, check the seal of the respirator on your face. Place your hands on the surface of the respirator and take a quick, deep breath. If you feel air blowing around your face or eyes, the respirator may not fit your face properly. Re-adjust the fit of your respirator and check the seal again.
- When you're finished wearing the respirator, carefully remove it, using the straps. Discard your respirator by carefully placing it in a waste container. Wash your hands immediately after handling the used respirator.

For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.