N95 Reuse Guide

This guidance is for any responder providing care to a person suspected of, or confirmed to be positive for COVID-19. There is no way of determining the maximum possible number of safe reuses for an N95 respirator to be applied in all cases. Safe N95 reuse is affected by a number of variables that impact respirator function and contamination over time.

To reduce the chances of decreased protection caused by a loss of respirator functionality, respiratory protection program managers should consult with the respirator manufacturer regarding the maximum number of donnings or uses recommended for the N95 respirator model(s) used. If no manufacturer guidance is available, preliminary data suggests limiting the number of reuses to no more than **<u>five</u>** uses per device to ensure an adequate safety margin.

The recommendations below are designed to provide practical advice so that N95 respirators are discarded before they become a significant risk for contact transmission or their functionality is reduced.

- *Discard* N95 respirators following use during aerosol generating procedures.
- *Discard* N95 respirators contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids from patients.
- *Discard* N95 respirators following close contact with any patient co-infected with an infectious disease requiring contact precautions.
- Use a cleanable face shield (preferred) or a surgical mask over an N95 respirator and/or other steps (e.g., masking patients, use of engineering controls), when feasible to reduce surface contamination of the respirator.
- Keep respirators in a clean, breathable container such as a paper bag between uses. To minimize potential cross-contamination, store respirators so that they do not touch each other and the person using the respirator is clearly identified. Paper bags should be disposed of between uses, and a clean paper bag used with each storage.
- Clean hands 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).
- Avoid touching the inside of the respirator. If inadvertent contact is made with the inside of the respirator, perform hand hygiene as described above.
- 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.
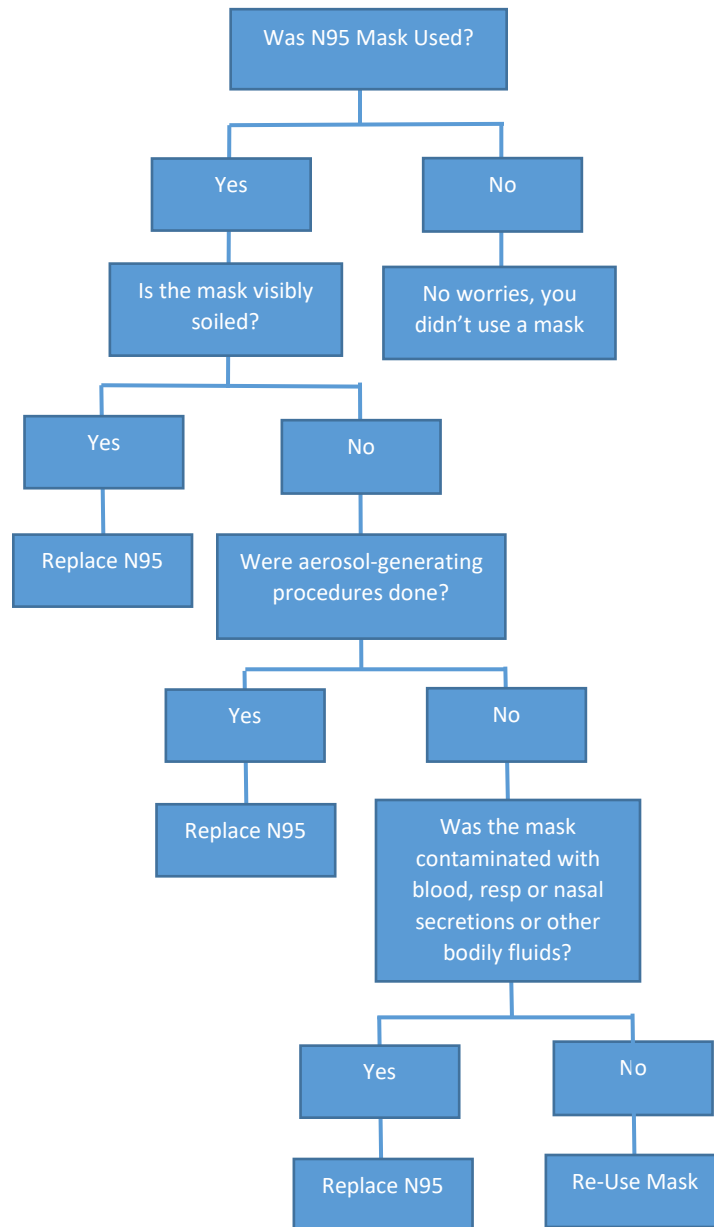
Procedural Tip Sheet-Reuse of N95 masks

DONNING:
- Perform hand hygiene
- Put on a pair of clean exam gloves
- Remove *your previously* used N95 mask from *your labeled* paper bag by **only touching the straps or the outermost rim of the N95 mask**
  - Care should be taken to not handle the front or insides of the N95 mask
  - If contact occurs, place N95 mask on top of bag, remove gloves, perform hand hygiene and put on new pair of gloves
- Place N95 mask on face by **only touching the straps and the outermost rim of the N95 mask**
- Perform seal check by **only by touching outermost rim of N95 mask**
- Throw the paper bag away- **do not reuse paper bag**
- Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene
- If necessary put on clean exam gloves

Removal and storage of a used N95 mask
- Remove all isolation PPE except the N95 mask in the patients room
- Exit the patient room with N95 mask on
- Perform hand hygiene and put on clean exam gloves
  - Obtain new/clean paper bag
  - Label with user's name and date
- Open bag for ease of N95 mask placement

- Remove the N95 mask by **only touching the straps or the outermost rim of the N95 mask**
- Place N95 mask in the labeled paper bag, handling **only the straps or the outermost rim of the N95 mask**
- Remove gloves
- Perform hand hygiene
- Close bag by folding over itself two times
  - **Take care to not fold, bend or crush the N95 mask inside the bag**
  - Ensure bag is 3 feet or more from a sink or potential splash zone
- Perform hand hygiene prior to leaving ante-room/doffing area

Flow Chart Courtesy of McLean County Area EMS System

Was N95 Mask Used?

- Yes
  - Is the mask visibly soiled?
    - Yes
      - Replace N95
    - No
      - Were aerosol-generating procedures done?
        - Yes
          - Replace N95
        - No
          - Was the mask contaminated with blood, resp or nasal secretions or other bodily fluids?
            - Yes
              - Replace N95
            - No
              - Re-Use Mask
- No
  - No worries, you didn't use a mask