

*The CDC has advised how to use N95 respirators in the absence of available fit testing. (See below for excerpt from the CDC.)*

**Key critical factors:**

- Proper donning and doffing
- Performing user seal checks with each use

**Donning the respirator:**

- Cup the respirator in your hand allowing the headbands to hang below your hand. Hold the respirator under your chin with the nosepiece up.
- The top strap (on single or double strap respirators) goes over and rests at the top back of your head. The bottom strap is positioned around the neck and below the ears. Do not crisscross straps. If you're wearing a hat, it should go over the straps.
- If the respirator has a nose clip (a thin metal bar at the top of the device), use your fingertips from both hands to mold the nose clip firmly against your nose and face. Do not pinch with one hand.
- Be sure to conduct a user seal check every time you put on the respirator. This should be done before you enter a patient room. Your respirator may have instructions on how to conduct a user seal check.
- Facial hair will cause the respirator to leak, so users should be clean-shaven. Some types of facial hair are acceptable as long as the facial hair does not lie along the sealing area of the respirator.
- If you feel dizzy, lightheaded, or nauseated, leave the patient room, remove your respirator, and get medical attention.
- Once the respirator is properly donned, perform a user seal check.

**How to do a positive pressure user seal check:**

Once the particulate respirator is properly donned, place your hands over the face piece, covering as much surface area as possible. Exhale gently into the face piece. The face fit is considered satisfactory if a slight positive pressure is being built up inside the face piece without any evidence of outward leakage of air at the seal.

Examples of such evidence would be the feeling of air movement on your face along the seal of the face piece, fogging of your glasses, or a lack of pressure being built up inside the face piece. If the particulate respirator has an exhalation valve, then performing a positive pressure check may be impossible. In such cases, a negative pressure check should be performed.

**How to do a negative pressure user seal check:**

Negative pressure seal checks are typically conducted on particulate respirators that have exhalation valves. To conduct a negative pressure user seal check, cover the filter surface with your hands as much as possible and then inhale. The face piece should collapse on your face and you should not feel air passing between your face and the face piece.

In the case of either type of seal check, if air leaks around the nose, use both hands to readjust the nosepiece by placing your fingertips at the top of the metal nose clip. Slide your fingertips down both sides of the metal strip to more efficiently mold the nose area to the shape of your nose. Readjust the straps along the sides of your head until a proper seal is achieved.

**Doffing the Respirator:**

- Do NOT TOUCH the front of the respirator! It may be contaminated.
- Remove by pulling the bottom strap over back of head, followed by the top strap, without touching the respirator.
- Keep your respirator clean and dry. Be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's recommendations on use and storage. (Note: Maxim is following CDC guidelines for extended use of respirators and has posted instructions on the Maxim COVID-19 resource site.)
- Discard the respirator when: (1) it becomes more difficult to breathe through it, (2) if it becomes dirty or (3) the respirator becomes damaged.

**Advice from the CDC****Fit Under Fire: Situational Strategies to Achieve the Best Respirator Fit During Crisis**

Under **serious outbreak conditions** in which respirator supplies are severely limited, however, you may not have the opportunity to be fit tested on a respirator before you need to use it. While this is not ideal, in this scenario, you should work with your employer to choose the respirator that fits you best, as, even without fit testing, a respirator will provide better protection than a facemask or using no respirator at all.

- If possible, start with the size you have been fit tested for previously, but as size can vary by manufacturer and model, you may need to wear a different size to achieve a good fit. (If you have never been fit tested before, the following recommendations are still useful.) The respirator should fit over your nose and under your chin. If you cannot get a good face seal, try a different model or size.
- If you receive respirators, and you need to use them right away without fit testing, ask your employer for additional (you should have already received training on proper respirator use and user seal checks) product training videos and literature on proper donning and doffing, which should be available from the manufacturer.
- Practice putting on the respirator and doing a user seal check at least several times. Check the fit in a mirror or ask a colleague to look to be sure the respirator is touching your face and appears to be on properly. While fit testing is ideal to confirm if a respirator does or does not fit, healthcare professionals should be able to obtain a good fit if they have had training and they perform a user seal check prior to each use of the respirator.

Even if workers begin using respirators without proper fit testing, employers should make every effort to perform fit testing as respirator supplies allow. Employers should always perform fit testing for workers who cannot successfully seal check their own respirators.

If you have any questions, please contact your local Maxim clinical representative or Employee Relations (employeerelations@maxhealth.com).