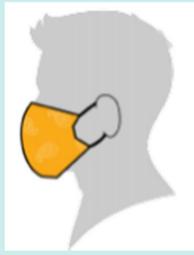


# Understanding the Difference

COVID-19 CDC Recommendations

Pre-COVID-19 CDC Recommendations



**Cloth Face Covering**



**Surgical Mask**



**N95 Respirator**



**Elastomeric Half Facepiece Respirator**

Testing and Approval	Recommended by CDC to help slow the spread of COVID-19	Cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)	Evaluated, tested, and approved by NIOSH as per the requirements in 42 CFR Part 84*	Evaluated, tested, and approved by NIOSH as per the requirements in 42 CFR Part 84
Intended Use and Purpose	When social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Protects others from the wearer's respiratory emissions.	Fluid resistant and provides the wearer protection against large droplets, splashes, or sprays of bodily or other hazardous fluids. Protects the patient from the wearer's respiratory emissions.	Reduces wearer's exposure to particles including small particle aerosols and large droplets (only non-oil aerosols)	Reusable device made of synthetic or rubber material
Face Seal Fit	Loose-fitting	Loose-fitting	Tight-fitting	Tight-fitting
Fit Testing Requirement	No	No	Yes	Yes
Designed for Reuse	Yes	No	No	Yes
User Seal Check	No	No	Yes. Required each time the respirator is donned (put on)	Yes. Required each time the respirator is donned (put on)
Filtration	Does NOT provide the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles and is not considered respiratory protection	Does NOT provide the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles and is not considered respiratory protection	Filters out at least 95% of airborne particles including large and small particles	May be equipped with filters that block 95%, 99%, or 100% of very small particulates. Also may be equipped to protect against vapors/gases.
Leakage	Leakage occurs around the edge of the covering when user inhales	Leakage occurs around the edge of the mask when user inhales	When properly fitted and donned, minimal leakage occurs around edges of the respirator when user inhales	When properly fitted and donned, minimal leakage occurs around edges of the respirator when user inhales
Use Limitations	Reusable. Routinely wash in washing machine depending on the frequency of use.	Disposable. Discard after each patient encounter.	Ideally should be discarded after each patient encounter and after aerosol-generating procedures. It should also be discarded when it becomes damaged or deformed; no longer forms an effective seal to the face; becomes wet or visibly dirty; breathing becomes difficult; or if it becomes contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids.	Reusable and must be cleaned/disinfected and stored between each patient interaction

\*As of July 2, 2018, NIOSH evaluates N95 FFRs intended for use in healthcare for biocompatibility, flammability, and fluid resistance to ensure conformity to relevant standards during the approval process. These tasks were previously performed by the FDA.

Content originally from:



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
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Cloth face covering content added by:



Environmental Health and Safety

Resources:

- Hospital Respiratory Protection Program Toolkit  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2015-117/pdfs/2015-117.pdf>
- Implementing Hospital Respiratory Protection Programs: Strategies from the Field  
[https://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/Implementing\\_Hospital\\_RPP\\_2-19-15.pdf](https://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/Implementing_Hospital_RPP_2-19-15.pdf)