Rotation Schedule for Reuse of Multiple N95 Respirators

April 13, 2020

Note: This rotation schedule does not apply to N95s that have been decontaminated by a process that may be available at the ministry or from an approved, FDA cleared commercial N95 reprocessing company.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide a procedure for the storage and reuse of more than one N95 respirator for a series of assigned work shifts.

Key Considerations:

- Provide colleagues that are regularly assigned to units in which PUIs or patients with confirmed COVID-19 more than one respirator based on available inventory.

- The goal is for the colleague to have enough N95s to reach a spacing of seven (7) days in between use of any individual N95. By example, if a colleague is scheduled for three 12 hour shifts over the course of the workweek, assess inventory of N95s and provide enough so the N95 used for the first shift of the week will not need to be reused until seven (7) calendar days have passed.
  - Rationale: One recent laboratory study found the concentration of the virus on the exterior of a mask was greatly reduced 7 days after it was contaminated with a high concentration of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.¹

- The process outlined below is aimed at using one N95 for an assigned work shift and then storing in a paper bag with the colleague’s name and indication of the day that it was used. For their next assigned shift, the colleague will obtain a clean, unused N95, use for this shift and store in a paper bag with indication of the day it was used.

- Ultimately, when there is enough supply of N95s, 7 days will have passed in between use of any one of these.

- Important: Ask Supply Chain lead at the ministry to assess levels of inventory as it is likely limited and therefore this rotation schedule may need to be limited to supply colleagues staffing unit(s) in which only those with COVID-19 are admitted.

Process:

Supplies needed: N95 respirators, paper bags and designated storage location

1. Discourage colleagues from wearing makeup on their face below their eyes to keep the inside of the N95 clean and free of marks from cosmetics.

2. Provide more than one N95 respirator to colleagues that are staffing units in which those with COVID-19 are admitted (e.g. cohort), based on the available supply, with a goal of allowing seven (7) calendar to pass in between use of any one of the N95s. This can be expanded to units in which PUJs are admitted if supply of N95s permits.
3. Have the colleague put their name on each N95 before it is put on. The label can be placed on one of the elastic head bands. Avoid use of ballpoint pen on the respirator surface as it may rip the facepiece material.

4. Provide a separate paper bag for each of the N95s and have the colleague label it with their name and the date it was used.

5. Based on the supply and the individual’s work schedule, provide enough N95s to the colleague to allow 7 days in between use of any single N95.

6. The colleague’s supervisor or other person can replenish N95s that had to be discarded due to damage or that have been visible soiled with bodily fluids.

7. The colleague will perform a fit seal on any N95 prior to use for each assigned shift.

8. Rotation Procedure:
   a. Check the date on the bag in which an N95 has been stored. Has it been 7 days since last used? If yes, it can be used for the shift.
   b. Put on a clean pair of gloves when donning or adjusting a previously worn N95 respirator.
   c. Perform a fit seal process after placing N95 over mouth and nose.
   d. Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.
   e. Wear a face shield over the respirator, if available, to reduce/prevent contamination of the N95 – especially during aerosol generating procedures.²
   f. Wear N95 until meal time/break. Place N95 in empty storage bag from which it was removed at the beginning of the shift for meals/breaks.
   g. At the end of use for the shift, perform proper doffing procedures.
   h. Place the N95 in a new paper bag, if available, and label with the colleague’s name and the date it was used.
   i. Inspect N95 for visible soil, cuts, rips, etc. prior to placing in bag after each use. If damaged or soiled – discard and obtain a replacement.

9. If storage space is inadequate for multiple N95s, the colleague can work with their supervisor to designate an empty room or other area for extended storage between shifts.

References: