To: 3M Customers and Authorized Channel Partners in the U.S.
Subject: Decontamination Methods for 3M™ N95 Respirators
Date: April 22, 2020

Dear Valued Customer and/or Channel Partner,

3M continues to address the COVID-19 pandemic from all angles with our focus on supporting healthcare and front-line workers around the world. The safety of our employees and the public, including healthcare workers and first responders, must be paramount.

During this public health emergency, many healthcare institutions are experiencing severe shortages of N95 respirators. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has issued Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators. In this document the CDC recommends conventional capacity strategies, contingency capacity strategies (during expected shortages) and crisis strategies (during known shortages).

3M has been collaborating with a number of sterilization companies and institutions that are investigating ways for hospitals to safely decontaminate N95 filtering facepiece respirators (FFRs). The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has published a list of decontamination systems it has authorized under Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) for use during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Please see the current information on these decontamination systems and a summary of testing on the effects of each system on the filtration efficiency and integrity of 3M respiratory protection products. We also recently published a story on our 3M News Center. It is important to note our evaluation of these systems are only in the context of impact on fit and filtration performance of select 3M N95 respirators.

If you have questions, please contact your assigned 3M representative.

Regards,



Michael DelVacchio
Vice President – USA and Canada
3M Medical Solutions Division

Preventing PPE-related skin injuries

Frequently Asked Questions

Adequate fit and seal of filtering facepiece respirators (FFRs) such as N95 respirators with the skin are required to provide expected and effective exposure reduction. The proper seal helps ensure that the majority of inhaled air will travel through the respirator's filter material. Anything that disrupts the fit and seal of the FFR will result in a reduction in the level of protection that the wearer can achieve with the FFR.

General tips for skin protection when wearing facial personal protective equipment (PPE) include choosing a skin protection product that:

- does not interfere with the seal of the respirator and/or fit of other facial PPE.
- does not transfer off your skin and onto the facial PPE
- protects skin from friction and moisture (waterproof)
- is breathable, so moisture can evaporate from your skin
- does not require removal or washing off
- has a low dermatitis potential
- Always read and follow all respirator user instructions, including conducting a use seal check every time the respirator is donned (put on)

Certain 3M skin health products may help protect the skin and not interfere with the fit of the respirator including:

- 3M™ Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier Film
- 3M™ Cavilon™ Advanced Skin Protectant

Certain 3M products, such as 3M™ Tegaderm™ Transparent Film Dressings, may be appropriate for use under respirators but as they protrude off the skin, the respirator should be fit tested using the film to ensure good fit.

Additionally, every time an FFR is donned, the wearer must conduct a user seal check. If a successful user seal check cannot be conducted, the wearer should not use the product with the respirator.

Other dressings, such as polyurethane foams and hydrocolloids, should not be used under the area where the FFR seals to the face as they are expected to interfere with the fit of the respirator.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use ointments (e.g. petroleum jelly) to protect my skin under a 3M filtering facepiece respirator (FFR), such as a N95 respirator?

3M does not recommend the use of petroleum jelly (also known as petrolatum), ointments, or thick creams because of the potential for interference with the seal of any of 3M's FFR's, such as N95 respirators. Petroleum jelly may cause the respirator to slip around on the face.

Can I use 3M™ Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier Film to protect my skin under a 3M filtering facepiece respirator (FFR), such as an N95 respirator?*

Yes, 3M™ Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier Film will help protect intact skin from moisture and friction and, when used properly, would not be expected to interfere with the fit of 3M filtering facepiece respirators (FFR).

- The 1 ml wipe or 1 ml wand applicator should be used.
- The product should be applied to clean, dry skin over any area where the FFR is likely to cause friction and/or where moisture may collect, e.g. the bridge of the nose, cheeks, tops of ears, or forehead.
- It can be used on the face, but should not be used in the eye, or on the eyelid.
- The product should be allowed to dry completely (at least 90 seconds) before the FFR is donned (put on). This allows fluid to dry on the skin and vapors to dissipate.
    - Upon application, an odor may be noted as the solvent ingredient evaporates. The odor will disappear as the product dries.
- Always read and follow all respirator user instructions, including conducting a use seal check every time the respirator is donned (put on).
- We recommend starting with a once daily application. If the user experiences buildup of the product, decrease the frequency of application, e.g. 3 times/week.
- Cavilon No Sting Barrier Film does not require removal but can be removed with a medical grade adhesive remover.
- Every time an FFR is donned, the wearer must conduct a user seal check. If a successful user seal check cannot be conducted, the wearer should not use the product with the respirator.

If my skin is already damaged, what type of skin protection product can I use under my 3M filtering facepiece respirators (FFR) such as an N95 respirator?

3M™ Cavilon™ Advanced Skin Protectant*,** can be used to help protect damaged skin, e.g. abrasions from friction or other superficial skin damage

- The 0.7 ml applicator is recommended.

- It can be used on the face, but should not be applied in or near the eye
- The product should be applied in a thin layer
- The product should be allowed to dry completely (at least 90 seconds) before the FFR is donned (put on). This allows fluid to dry on the skin and vapors to dissipate.
    - Upon application, an odor may be noted as the solvent ingredient evaporates. The odor will disappear as the product dries.
- Always read and follow all respirator user instructions, including conducting a use seal check every time the respirator is donned (put on).
- We recommend starting with a 2-3 times per week application. If the user notes buildup of the product, decrease the frequency of application, e.g. 1-2 times/week.
- Cavilon Advanced Skin Protectant does not require removal but can be removed with a medical adhesive remover containing hexamethyldisiloxane or a silicone.
- Every time an FFR is donned, the wearer must conduct a user seal check. If a successful user seal check cannot be conducted, the wearer should not use the product with the respirator.

If my skin is already damaged, can I use a dressing under 3M filtering facepiece respirators (FFR) such as an N95 respirator?

3M does not recommend use of dressings such as polyurethane foams and hydrocolloids. These types of dressings can raise the respirator off the cheeks and nose and may interfere with the intended seal and exposure reduction associated with the respirator.

- If use of a dressing or bandage is desired, select the *thinnest* dressing available (e.g. 3M™ Tegaderm™ Transparent Film Dressing) AND perform fit testing, as well as a user seal check every time the respirator is donned (put on).
    - The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires, "The fit test shall be performed while the test subject is wearing any applicable safety equipment that may be worn during actual respirator use which could interfere with respirator fit" (29 CFR § 1910.134 Appendix A). ISO 16975-3:2017 Part 3 also includes this requirement.
    - Outside the United States, the health care facility should be familiar with applicable local standards.
- For those respirators with adjustable headbands, it is important to not over-tighten 3M filtering facepiece respirators (FFR) such as N95 respirators as this can interfere with the seal against the skin and increase the risk of pressure-related skin damage

Note: Dressings or film barriers can be used to help prevent or cover areas of skin damage under equipment, such as face shields, where fit and seal is not critical to the function of the protective equipment.

*Please refer to the product inserts (Instructions for use) for 3M™ Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier Film and/or 3M™ Cavilon™ Advanced Skin Protectant for complete Indications and Instructions for Use, Contraindications, Precautions, and Warnings.

** Federal Law (U.S.A.) restricts the device to sale by or on the order of a health care professional

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