Best practice is to use new N95s. Decontamination does not solve the PPE shortage crisis, and is an emergency practice to be considered during the COVID-19 pandemic. Efficacy and safety of N95 decontamination has not been fully characterized.

Donning & Doffing

This is an example process. Specifics will vary between hospitals. Relevant hospital personnel should be consulted before any process implementation. This process can be used with an in-hospital, return to index user decontamination method. It may not be compatible with external decontamination services.

Donning

Each don/doff can reduce N95 fit. In one study the fit factor was observed to drop with each don/doff, and after five dons was consistently below the OSHA standard of 1001

- If using a new N95, label with a soft-tipped permanent marker:
  - First initial and last name
  - Transfer Station location code
- If using a decontaminated N95:
  - Retrieve N95 from your spot in the CLEANED section
  - Inspect for damage or elongated straps and dispose of damaged N95 respirators
  - Add a tally mark on the N95 to indicate another decontamination cycle has been performed
- Don PPE according to institution guidelines
  - Perform a user seal check
  - Perform hand hygiene before donning further PPE

Doffing

Improper doffing has been shown to expose the wearer to contamination risk. Proper doffing must accompany decontamination.

- Doff other PPE according to institution guidelines
- For N95 doffing:
  - At Transfer Station, obtain a breathable bag labeled with first initial, last name, and Transfer Station location code
  - Put on clean gloves
  - Remove N95 following CDC guidelines
    - Only hold straps, do not touch front of N95 when doffing
    - Do not touch or allow potentially contaminated materials (such as N95 straps) to touch the inside of the N95
  - Inspect N95; dispose of it if damaged, soiled, or unlabeled
  - Place N95 into breathable bag, then place bag into assigned spot in the DIRTY section
  - Perform hand hygiene before doffing any further PPE

References:

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