

Fit checking a P2 or N95 respirator (mask)

The manufacturer's instructions for proper wearing of a respirator and fit checking of individual brands and types of P2/N95 respirators should be referred to at all times.

Donning the respirator

- Prior to donning the respirator, check that it is not damaged.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for donning the respirator.
- Conform the respirator to your face by pressing with your fingers across the bridge of the nose until it fits snugly.

Performing the fit check (commonly called the user-seal check)

- The fit check includes both positive and negative pressure seal checks and should be performed as per the specific manufacturer's instructions for each type of respirator.
- Check the positive pressure seal of the respirator by exhaling. If the seal is good the respirator should bulge slightly when you exhale. If air escapes between your face and the respirator, you do NOT have a good facial seal. Readjust the respirator and repeat the fit check process.
- Check the negative pressure seal of the respirator by inhaling. The respirator should collapse slightly when you inhale. If the respirator is not drawn in towards the face or air leaks, you do NOT have a good facial seal. Readjust the respirator and repeat the fit check process.
- If you are unable to achieve a good facial seal do not proceed with your clinical activity. Possible reasons include:
 - the respirator has not been put on properly e.g. headbands are incorrectly positioned, hair or earrings are caught in the seal
 - glasses or face-shield are interfering with the seal (you do not have a seal if they fog)
 - the respirator is the incorrect size or type for your face
 - healthcare workers who have facial hair (including a 1–2 day beard growth) must be aware that an adequate seal cannot be guaranteed between the respirator and the wearer's face.¹
- Speak to your supervisor if you cannot achieve a good facial seal after addressing the possible reasons listed. An alternative style or size of respirator may need to be sourced.

Resources

A PowerPoint presentation that demonstrates fit checking is available at:

http://www.health.qld.gov.au/chrisp/resources/Fit_Check.ppt

1. National Health and Medical research Council (NHMRC) for the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare. *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare: 2010*. [cited 17 February 2013]. Available from: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/cd33>