N95 User Seal Check Guide

What is a User Seal Check?
A simple procedure performed by the mask wearer to verify if the N95 respirator is being properly worn
Note: User Seal Checking is NOT a substitute for Fit Testing. Everyone wearing a respirator must be fit tested before wearing for patient care to determine the appropriate mask size. Contact your manager if you have any questions about being fit tested.

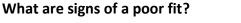**When should I perform a User Seal Check?**
A User Seal Check must be conducted each and every time an N95 respirator is worn to ensure proper protection. Do not proceed into a patient's room until a successful User Seal Check has been completed.

How do I perform a User Seal Check?
Properly don N95 respirator (See directions on page 2)
Next, forcefully inhale and exhale several times
    The respirator should collapse slightly upon inhaling and expand upon exhaling
    The wearer should not feel any air leaking between their face and the respirator
    This is the sign of a good facial fit and a successful User Seal Check.

Note collapse in respirator with inhale

What are signs of a poor fit?
Any leak of air at the seal is considered a poor fit. This is evidenced by
    o   Feeling movement of air on your face along the seal of the respirator
    o   Fogging of your glasses
    o   Lack of pressure being built up inside the respirator on exhalation.

What do I do if my mask does not pass the User Seal Check?
The mask should be readjusted until the leakage is corrected. To do this, use both hands to readjust the metal piece of the mask and slide your fingers down both sides to more effectively mold the mask to the shape of your nose and cheeks. Ensure straps are properly placed at the crown of your head and nape of your neck. This positioning enables the straps to hold the bottom of the respirator snug against your chin.

How long can my N95 respirator be worn?
The same healthcare worker can use a N95 mask for multiple patients until User Seal Check is unsuccessful or the mask becomes damaged or contaminated. The exact amount of time for which the respirator is used is not limited since the filtration efficiency is not degraded by use in normal room air. However, donning and removing the respirator several times creates the potential for damage. The wearer should inspect the respirator for damage, check the fit and perform a User Seal Check each time it is put on.

Tips for Achieving a Good Fit:
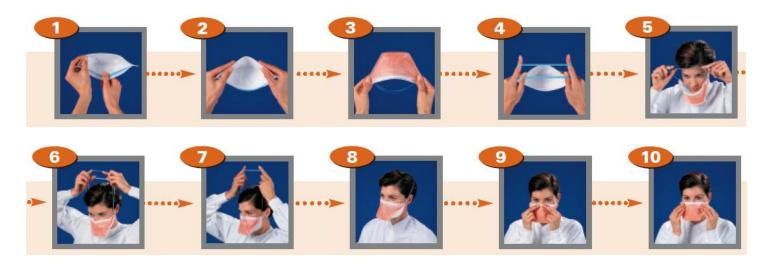   If you are having a problem successfully User Seal Checking the respirator, try the following tips:
    •   Use a mirror while adjusting the respirator.
    •   Ask someone to look for hair or earrings that might be caught in the seal.
    •   Make sure the headbands are positioned properly.

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Directions for Proper Donning of N95 Respirator

1. Separate the edges of the respirator to fully open it.

2. Slightly bend the nose wire to form a gentle curve.

3. Hold the respirator upside down to expose the two headbands.

4. Using your index fingers and thumbs, separate the two headbands.

5. While holding the headbands with your index fingers and thumbs, cup the respirator under your chin.

6. Pull the headbands up over your head.

7. Release the lower headband from your thumbs and position it at the base of your neck.

8. Position the remaining headband on the crown of your head.

9. Conform the nosepiece across the bridge of your nose by firmly pressing down with your fingers.

10. Continue to adjust the respirator and secure the edges until you feel you have achieved a good facial fit. Now, perform a Fit Check.

References

CDC NIOSH — Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

Kimberly-Clark — Trusted Clinical Solutions*

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