



## **PPE guidelines for procedures and examinations around the mouth and nose**

Consistent with the CDC, the AAD recommends dermatologists and their staff wear a mask at all times and patients should wear a cloth facemask or covering if they do not have a surgical mask. Current data suggest person-to-person transmission most commonly happens during close exposure to a person infected with SARS-CoV2 that causes COVID-19, primarily via respiratory droplets produced when the infected person speaks, coughs, or sneezes can land in the mouths, noses, or eyes of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs of those within close proximity.

Many patients with COVID-19 frequently do not report typical symptoms such as fever or respiratory symptoms; some may not report any symptoms. Even when pre-screening and testing of patients for COVID-19 is adequate, there is a chance it could go undetected. Unrecognized asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic infections may contribute to transmission in healthcare settings.

Dermatologists often work near the mouth and nose performing procedures – be it cosmetic, surgical, performing a physical examination, or an examination with a dermatoscope. To perform these procedures, patients are awake and routinely without a mask, under these circumstances without being able to fully source control for asymptomatic patients with infection, the dermatologist is at risk. Given this potential risk of contagion during these procedures, N95 respirators that meet the NIOSH N95 classification of air filtration should be considered for use at the health care provider’s discretion for protection.

Due to shortages of N95 respirators, KN95 respirators may be used. Physicians should follow the [FDA Emergency Use Authorization](#) (EUA) from April 3, 2020 making KN95 respirators eligible for authorization if certain criteria are met, including evidence demonstrating that the respirator is authentic. It is also advised to follow AAD guidelines for respirator use; reuse may be appropriate, but if reusing it should be covered with a face shield, and respirators should not be used for more than 8 hours continuously, or 5 days intermittently. Typically, surgical masks are not intended for repeated use.

## **References**

Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>



Reopening the dermatologic surgery office in the COVID-19 era

<https://www.aad.org/dw/dw-insights-and-inquiries/2020-archive/may/reopening-the-dermatologic-surgery-office>

Short Term Recommendations for Cutaneous Melanoma Management During COVID-19 Pandemic <https://www.nccn.org/covid-19/pdf/Melanoma.pdf>

Advisory Statement for Non-Melanoma Skin Cancer Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic <https://www.nccn.org/covid-19/pdf/NCCN-NMSC.pdf>

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Jacofsky D, Jacofsky E, Jacofsky M. Understanding Antibody Testing for COVID-19. Journal of Arthroplasty. 2020. Printed online April 18, 2020

The Airborne Lifetime of Small Speech Droplets and Their Potential Importance in SARS-CoV-2 Transmission Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2020 May 13; 202006874. doi: 10.1073/pnas.2006874117. Online ahead of print.

Protecting healthcare workers from SARS-CoV-2 infection: practical indications  
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FDA News Release, Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: Daily Roundup April 3, 2020  
<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-daily-roundup-april-3-2020> and <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/emergency-use-authorizations# covid19ppe>

***FDA website, N95 Respirators, Surgical Masks, and Face Masks.***

<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-infection-control/n95-respirators-surgical-masks-and-face-masks>

***CDC website. Strategies to Optimize the Supply of PPE and Equipment.***

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>



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**CDC website. [Decontamination and Reuse of Filtering Facepiece Respirators.](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/decontamination-reuse-respirators.html)**

**<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/decontamination-reuse-respirators.html>**