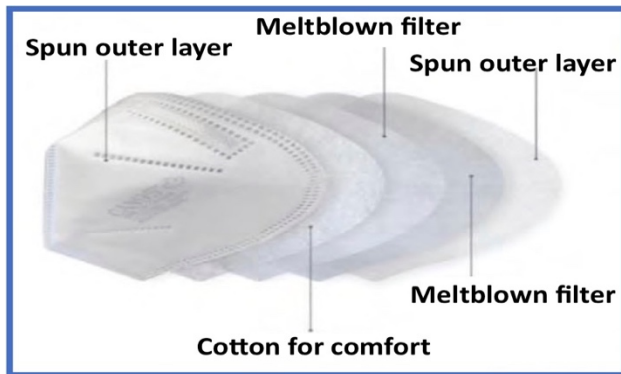


Stop inhaling particles in the air – use a disposable respirator

Masks are NOT all the same

Three things matter: fit, filter and function

Respirators are the best kind of masks. They protect you **and** others. Some respirators are designed to stop inhaling particles in the air – like viruses and wildfire smoke. Another kind stops you inhaling gases, vapours or mists. (There also are re-usable respirators, called elastomeric.)



Disposable respirators that protect you from particles use special materials to **filter** what you inhale and exhale (see picture). They don't work well if they get wet or dirty.

Certified respirators will be called **N95 or N99** and have a **CA** or **NIOSH** number. Used properly, they will filter out almost every particle in the air.

Unlike other masks, most respirators do not have ear loops. To be certified as a respirator, they need **two straps for a good fit**. Hair on your face around the edges of the respirator can cause leaks when you inhale or exhale.

Putting on the respirator

If you're going to wear something on your head or around your neck, put the respirator on first.

Take the respirator from the package. Stretch the straps.

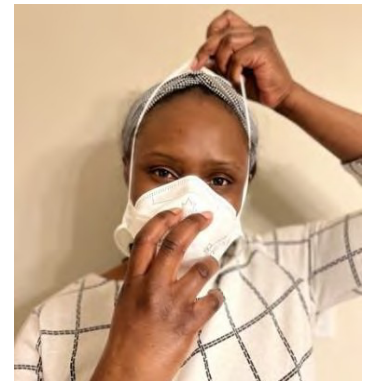


Hold it with the logo facing out and up. Open the top and bottom flaps all the way. Pinch the bottom and top flaps, and pull them out. Bend the nose piece around

your thumb as you do this. Try not to touch the inside.

Hold the respirator in one hand. Get the straps on the outside of your hand. Place it on your face so the metal nose piece is over the top (bridge) of your nose. **Don't press down yet.**

Make sure the bottom panel is snug on your chin. (Some people find it's easier to tuck the bottom of the respirator under their chin first.)



It doesn't matter which strap goes on first. The **top strap goes** at the **back of your head** so it won't move. The **bottom strap** usually goes over your head and below your ears **around your neck**. It should be against the skin, not around your hair.

For more information

- about how disposable respirators work, see *The genius of N95 masks* (<https://bit.ly/44lamiA>).
- about disposable respirators and how to put them on and take them off, see the video behind the QR code.



The respirator should fit comfortably on your face. The flaps should stay unfolded. Make sure that nothing gets in the way of a good fit or seal to your face. Check for hair, jewelry and clothing.

Use the fingertips of **both** hands to press the **metal nose piece** where your nose meets your cheeks. (Pinching the top of your nose can leave a space there.)



Make it fit the shape of your whole nose and onto your cheeks. That gives a tight seal.

Checking the fit (the seal)

Put your hands over the center panel. Breathe in and out sharply. Be careful not to move the respirator.



If it doesn't have a good seal, you should feel air escaping. If air leaks around the nose or your glasses fog up, adjust the metal strips. If air leaks from the sides, adjust the head straps. **Make sure the respirator fits snugly against your face.**

Check the seal **each time** you put on the respirator.

Taking off the respirator

Particles should be trapped inside the filter material. If germs are an issue, avoid touching the inside of the respirator.

The simplest way to take off the respirator is to gently hold the bottom strap, and pull it carefully over your head. Do the same thing with the top strap. They should come off easily.



You can re-use the respirator

These are disposable respirators. They can be used several times. **If it's wet or dirty, it won't work properly.** It also will not work properly if the straps get too loose.

If you want to use a respirator again, hang it up in a clean place (a paper – not plastic -- bag works if it might get dirty). If you have more than one respirator, you could use a different one each day.

When the respirator can't be used (again)

When the disposable respirator is dirty or wet, or the straps are loose, put it in the garbage, unless there is a respirator recycling program. (Some manufacturers do this.) Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.



OHCO

Occupational Health Clinics
for Ontario Workers Inc.

Centres de santé des
travailleurs (ses) de l'Ontario Inc.

This fact sheet was prepared for OHCO's
Migrant Agricultural Worker Program
(Updated June, 2023)

Text or What'sApp: +1 289-684-2821

E-mail mfw@ohcow.on.ca.

Follow us on Facebook: [OHCO Ag-Program](#)