

# Additional information on P2 respirators

## P2 respirators – fit testing and checking

In order for a P2 respirator to offer the maximum desired protection it is essential that the wearer is properly fitted and trained in its safe use. Healthcare workers (HCWs) should actively observe each other's mask fitting and immediately advise of any fitting issues to maximise HCW and patient safety.

### Fit testing

Fit testing is a complex process that seeks to identify which size and style of P2 respirator is suitable for an individual HCW.

### Fit checking

HCWs must perform fit checks every time they put on a P2 respirator to ensure it is properly applied. No clinical activity should be undertaken until a satisfactory fit has been achieved.

Fit checks ensure the respirator is sealed over the bridge of the nose and mouth and that there are no gaps between the respirator and face. The manufacturer's instructions for fit checking of individual brands and types of P2 respirator should be referred to at all times.

### The procedure for fit checking includes (see Figure 1):

- Placement of the respirator on the face
- Placement of the headband or ties over the head and at the base of the neck
- Compressing the respirator to ensure a seal across the face, cheeks and the bridge of the nose
- Checking the positive pressure seal of the respirator by gently exhaling. If air escapes, the respirator needs to be adjusted.
- Checking the negative pressure seal of the respirator by gently inhaling. If the respirator is not drawn in towards the face, or air leaks around the face seal, readjust the respirator and repeat process, or check for defects in the respirator.

HCWs who have facial hair (including a 1–2 day beard growth) must be aware that an adequate seal cannot be guaranteed between the P2 respirator and the wearer's face.

Figure 1 Fitting a P2 Respirator. Source: Australian Government Department of Health



Position respirator over mouth and nose



Position tapes above and below ears at back of head



Fit snugly at bridge of nose and chin by using the adjusters

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## Wearing a P2 respirator

### Considerations when using a P2 respirator include:

- Do not touch while being worn
- Must be changed when they become moist
- Do not reuse respirators after they have been removed
- Respirators should not be left dangling around the neck
- If a good facial seal cannot be achieved (e.g. the intended wearer has a beard or long moustache), an alternative respirator such as a powered air-purifying respirator (PAPR) should be used
- Hand hygiene should be performed upon touching or disposing of a used respirator.

### Removal of a P2 respirator

Correct removal of a P2 respirator is important as there is a risk of contamination to the user if not removed correctly. Considerations when removing a P2 respirator include (Figure 2):

- Removal of respirators should be by the straps from the back of the head
- Respirators should be removed outside the patient-care area and disposed of in a closed receptacle

**Figure 2** Removing and disposing of a P2 Respirator. Source: Australian Government Department of Health



With clean hands, grasp tapes at back of head and remove by only handling the tapes



Discard appropriately



Wash hands

## Resources

This information was adapted from:

National Health and Medical Research Council (2020) *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare*

NSW Health Clinical Excellence Commission (2020). *Infection Prevention and Control Practice Handbook*

More information on infection prevention and control for COVID-19 is available from the NSW Health Clinical Excellence Commission website.

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