

COVID-19 Update

Employee and Physician Information



Memo from the Vice President

April 18, 2020

Re: Collection and Sterilization of used N95 respirators

Since April 4th, we have been asking you to assist in the collection of used N95 respirators as we wait for the approval from Health Canada to begin the sterilization of N95 respirators. We are pleased to share that Health Canada has approved this process for hospitals across the country, and we are ready to move forward with single-user reuse of N95 respirators.

This innovative approach will help us maintain a safe supply of N95 respirators for our staff and physicians as we respond to COVID-19. The reprocessing of respirators also ensures that our health-care professionals are safely protected and able to provide needed care with confidence.

Given that Health Canada approval is now in place, health-care workers should now follow the below guidelines for collection and sterilization of N95 respirators:

1. Health-care workers who provide direct care to patients will receive an N95 respirator. If the respirator becomes soiled or damaged, it will not be recycled and will be discarded at point of use.
2. The recycling of N95 respirators applies to all staff using N95 respirators on units including the COVID-19 units. Please note the following exception: used N95 respirators will not be collected from pharmacy or any area where an N95 respirator was used around pharmaceuticals.
3. Prior to using an N95 respirator, staff are asked to mark their name, employee number and unit with a permanent marker on a label that will be provided. Permanent markers will be supplied to the units. Staff should place the label on the back lower strap of the respirator by folding it over to attach it to the strap.
4. Staff will don their respirator as per IPAC precautions.
5. Upon completion of patient/resident care, staff will doff the respirator as per the IPAC process.
6. Staff will place their used respirator in the paper bag provided at the collection bin area.

7. Staff should close the paper bag by folding the top of the bag and placing it in collection bin.
8. Medical Device Reprocessing (MDR) staff will collect all bins daily and transport bins with N95 respirators back to MDR for reprocessing.
9. Sterile supply technicians will reprocess respirators as per process.
10. MDR staff will redistribute N95 respirators back to the units once they have been reprocessed for staff to collect their N95 for their shift. Staff will receive the same N95 respirator that they put through for reprocessing.

The sterilizing process will be completed up to two times on each N95 respirator using Sterrad sterilizers. This sterilizer has been used for many years within Eastern Health to achieve low temperature sterilization of medical devices through the use of vaporized hydrogen peroxide.

We would like to reassure our staff and physicians that we are confident in this process which has received Health Canada approval following rigorous validation testing by the manufacturer. The same approach is also being used in other provinces across the country.

We thank you for your continued dedication and support during this public health emergency. Please know that your health and safety of staff remains a priority. If you have an questions, please see the [COVID-19 intranet page](#).

Ron Johnson

Vice President with responsibility for Medical Device Reprocessing

For more information:

- [COVID-19 Employee and Physician Email Updates](#)
- Visit: [COVID-19 Intranet page](#)
- Email: covid19.inquiries@easternhealth.ca
- Call: [Employee and Physician Navigator Line](#) at (709) 752-3663, 24 hours/7 days a week.
- Updates pertaining to Eastern Health's ongoing services will be posted on Eastern Health's [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter feed](#).