

Q fever prevention - how to fit a P2 mask



Why use a P2 face mask? (also called N95)

Disposable P2/N95 face masks (also known as P2/N95 respirators) are able to filter out very fine particles from the air when worn correctly, and so reduce the risk of airborne transmission of Q fever and other infectious diseases when working in potentially contaminated areas. This is not a substitute for Q fever vaccination. Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent Q fever.

P2/N95 face masks are widely available from hardware stores and other safety equipment suppliers.

Putting on and checking the mask

Take time to correctly identify which size and style of mask is suitable for you.

Each time a P2/N95 face mask is used it should be fit checked before entering an unsafe environment. Fit checks ensure that the mask is sealed over the bridge of the nose and mouth, and that there are no gaps in the seal between the mask and the face.

P2/N95 face masks should always be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Procedure for putting on a P2/N95 face mask and conducting a fit check:

1. Remove glasses and hats. Tie back long hair so it does not become tangled in the straps of the respiratory protection
2. Put the mask on your face, ensuring the nose piece is at the top of the mask
3. Place the headband or ties over the head and at the base of the neck
4. Compress the mask against the face to ensure a seal across the bridge of the nose
5. Compress the mask to ensure a seal across the cheeks and the face; and
6. Conduct a fit check: check the seal of the mask by gently inhaling. If the mask is not drawn in towards the face, or air leaks around the face seal, readjust the mask and repeat process or check for defects in the mask. If the mask still leaks you may need to try a different size or style of mask.

People with beards should shave before using a P2 mask as a good seal between the mask and the wearer's face cannot be guaranteed if they have facial hair.

Removing the P2 face mask

1. The surfaces of the mask will be contaminated so avoid touching them. Lean forward and remove the mask by pulling the straps from the back of your head forward.
2. Drop the used mask into a contaminated waste bin (or closable bin).
3. Wash your hands and arms thoroughly in soapy water, or use alcohol hand-rub.

Maintaining effective protection

- Change the mask when it becomes moist
- Wash your hands if you touch or dispose of a used mask
- Wait until you are outside the potentially contaminated area before removing the mask

Don't touch the mask while it is being worn

Don't reapply the mask after it has been removed (always use a new mask instead)

Don't leave the mask dangling around your neck or sitting on top of your head

Please note that this advice should not be used in place of existing personal protective equipment guidance for healthcare workers or other work sectors.

Further information

- Clinical Excellence Commission. Infection Prevention and Control Practice Handbook (2016). Available at cec.health.nsw.gov.au/patient-safety-programs/assurance-governance/healthcare-associated-infections/key-documents
- NHMRC. Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010). Available at nhmrc.gov.au/book/html-australian-guidelines-prevention-and-control-infection-healthcare-2010
- See related factsheets [Q Fever](#), [Q Fever Vaccination](#) and [Q Fever and Farms](#).

Image Credit: NSW Department of Primary Industries
Emergency Management Unit