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Idaho Health Alert Network Informational Message: N95 Respirators for Healthcare Providers

Some Idaho healthcare facilities have reported that N95 respirators are backordered through their medical supply distributors. The US Food and Drug Administration is actively reaching out to manufacturers to monitor supply and no shortages have been identified in the United States. Globally, there is concern about the supply of surgical masks and respirators. The World Health Organization is working with partners to help increase global production.

Healthcare facilities and healthcare providers (HCP) who have concerns about or have difficulty maintaining adequate stock of N95 respirators, are encouraged to consult the following recommendations and resources.

Approaches to Conserving Supplies of N95 Respirators While Safeguarding Staff

- Minimize the number of HCP who need to use respiratory protection through the preferential use of engineering and administrative controls. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/infection-control.html>
 - Engineering controls include use of airborne isolation rooms and barriers such glass/plastic windows between reception staff and incoming patients.
 - Administrative controls include: limit the number of HCP entering the patient's room, limit face-to-face encounters with a patient, exclude visitors, place facemasks (surgical mask) on patients with symptoms of respiratory infection until they can be isolated, cohort patients with confirmed COVID-19, cohort HCP caring for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- Under continuum of care *conventional capacity*
 - Do not use surgical N95 respirators when standard N95 respirators may be used.
 - Use alternatives to N95 respirators.
 - Other classes of respirators (N99, N100, P95, P99, P100, R95, R99, and R100) https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part/default.html
 - Elastomeric respirators (outside of surgical settings). Many healthcare facilities are not familiar with the use of elastomeric respirators.
 - National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) blog: <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2017/07/06/elastomerics/>
 - Reusable Elastomeric Respirators in Health Care: Considerations for Routine and Surge Use: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK540078/>
 - Elastomeric and Powered Air Purifying Respirators in U.S. Healthcare: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/ElastomericPAPR-Healthcare-508.pdf>
 - Powered air purifying respirators (PAPRs) (outside of surgical settings)
- Under continuum of care *contingency capacity*
 - Implement practices allowing extended use or limited reuse of N95 respirators, when acceptable <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html>

- Prioritize the use of N95 respirators for those HCP at the highest risk of acquiring infection or of experiencing complications of infection.
 - Exposure risk factors for HCP: Table 1 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>
 - Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.

Additional Resources

Strategies for Ensuring Healthcare Systems Preparedness and Optimizing N95 Supplies. CDC webinar for healthcare professionals at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_lG5YMy3k&feature=emb_title.

Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators (CDC):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-supply-strategies.html>

Considerations for Respirator Selection in Healthcare (NIOSH): Chart at

https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/FY17_N95chartConsiderations-508.pdf

NIOSH-Approved Particulate Filtering Facepiece Respirators (NIOSH)

https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part/default.html

Frequently Asked Questions about Respirators and Their Use:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-use-faq.html>

Elastomeric and Powered-Air Purifying Respirators in U.S. Healthcare (NIOSH presentation)

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/ElastomericPAPR-Healthcare-508.pdf>

Crisis Standards of Care: Continuum of Care: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK202387/#sec_021

Public Health District Preparedness Programs are available to assist with locating PPE supplies (local, regional, and federal) for healthcare partners.

<https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/HealthDistricts/tabid/97/Default.aspx>.