

KN95 Masks: FAQs



The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has a supply of respirators (facial masks) to be used for medical purposes. The following information explains the difference between the models and how both can be used safely and effectively.

Does DPH have N95 respirators and KN95 respirators available for distribution?

Yes, but the supply of N95 is very limited. Because the N95 models filter out more particles than the KN95, they are reserved for professionals who need the greatest protection: those who are performing intubations, doing CPR or giving nebulizer treatments.

KN95 masks should not be used to protect staff members performing aerosol-generating procedures on a COVID-19 positive patient.

DPH has KN95 respirators for staff not exposed to such aerosol-generating environments.

What is the difference between N95 respirators and KN95 respirators?

Such filtering face coverings are subject to different standards around the world. The United States regulates N95 models; the Chinese government regulates the KN95 models.

With the current shortage of N95 masks in our country, KN95 are an acceptable alternative.

Has DPH tested the KN95 respirators from China to determine their efficiency?

Yes. MIT conducted the initial testing, during which two key elements were measured:

1. **Filter material performance.** This measures the reduction in concentrations of specific airborne compounds, such as the COVID-19 virus, in air that passes through the mask.
2. **Filter material pressure drop.** Also known as breathing resistance, this measures the resistance air receives as it moves through the mask.

Can KN95 respirators from DPH be used in hospitals, nursing facilities and other healthcare settings?

Yes. However, as noted above, only N95 respirators should be used for aerosol-generating procedures such as intubations, CPR or nebulizer treatments.

How should the KN95 masks fit to provide protection?

The respirator must form a seal with the worker's face, so air passes through the filter—not around the edges—before it is inhaled. To make a tight seal, the wearer should be certain the edges of the mask do not touch any facial hair; being clean-shaven works best for men. Each mask should be tested to be sure the size and fit are correct for each person wearing one.

What types of groups/locations can receive KN95 from DPH?

The following locations can receive and use KN95 masks being supplied by DPH:

Hospitals	Emergency Medical Services
Nursing Homes	Local Public Health
Community Health Centers	Other Health Facilities

We thank you for working together as we all battle this virus.