Respirator Fit Testing

A guide by Ventura County Toothbrush Prophy Workgroup By Marie Alejandrino-Buell, DMD

Importance of Respirator Fit Testing for Dental Health Care Professionals (DHCP)

COVID-19 is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2). It is thought to spread mainly from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). While it may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

DHCP works within this 6 foot radius and as such is at high risk of contracting the virus. A properly fitting Respirator is one of the best ways of protecting themselves from being infected by the virus.

HOW TO FIT TEST RESPIRATOR MASKS?

- → QUALITATIVE FIT TEST
- → QUANTITATIVE FIT TEST

QUALITATIVE FIT TEST

- Does not measure amount of air leaking into face piece
- Pass/Fail Test
- Uses sense of taste/smell or reaction to irritant to detect leaks
- Does not measure amount of air leaking into face piece
- Test subject detects leakage of test substance.
- Mostly for half-mask respirators like N95 face masks
- 4 methods accepted by OSHA:
 - Isoamyl Acetate- smells like bananas
 - Saccharin- tastes sweet
 - Bitrex- tastes bitter
 - Irritant Smoke- causes coughing



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Quantitative:

- Uses a machine to measure actual amount of leakage into face piece
- No taste or smell test used to detect leakage.
- Can be used for any tight fitting respirator
- Mostly used for full face respirators
- 3 methods accepted by OSHA
 - Generated Aerosol
 - Ambient Aerosol
 - Controlled Negative Pressure



Respirator fit tests must be taken before a worker wears a mask for the first time FOR EVERY TYPE OF RESPIRATOR MASK. The worker must also take the fit test every year after that. Fit tests must also be taken if there are changes to a person's face that could change the fit of the respirator. These changes can include things like:

- weight change that changes their face
- dental work
- face surgery
- face scarring

EVERY TYPE OF RESPIRATOR MASK MUST BE TESTED THE FIRST TIME IT IS GOING TO BE USED Tight-fitting respirators can't protect you unless they fit, they're held to tougher standards. OSHA demands respirator fit testing only on tight-fitting respirators, and those respirators that don't rely on a tight seal around a person's face do not require testing.





CURRENT RULES

Absent testing, all patients are presumed Covid 19 positive. All dental staff involved in the provision of care to this patient should be wearing an N95 respirator covered by a face shield, along with a gown and gloves in compliance with CDC recommendations for healthcare workers who will be within 6 feet of an unmasked patient.



Materials:

- Respiratory Clearance
- Respiratory Fit Test Kit
- N95 mask or approved equivalent





Respirator Clearance (OSHA) 1910.134) This medical evaluation should occur prior to the employee being allowed to wear a respirator. A respirator clearance only clears the employee to wear a respirator and the general type of respirator they can use.



Note:

The standard medical evaluation is a questionnaire. Many people are cleared based on their answers to the questionnaire alone and don't require a physical visit to a doctor.

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California Dental Association

BACK TO PRACTICE RESOURCES



Resources are available for dentists to do the required initial fit test themselves should they wish to do so.





On busy job sites, getting results – and getting them quickly – is vital. To save you time, money, and the hassle of coordinating clinic appointments, 3M facilitates a convenient, online method for employers to obtain medical evaluation of respirator wearers as required by the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134**). The Online Respirator Medical Evaluation has a web-based interactive questionnaire, which gives you immediate notification of the results.

Try 2 FREE evaluations today!*
3M.com/OMEPromo

Here are some of the benefits the Online Respirator Medical Evaluation Service offers:

Convenience

- Respirator medical evaluations for all brands and types of respirators
- Most employees do not need to leave the work site
- Questionnaires available in both English and Spanish
- Evaluations can be taken 24 hours/day, 7 days/week from any computer with internet access

Speed

 It takes most employees only 15 to 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire

Consistency

 All employees are evaluated using the same expanded OSHA Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire

Quality

- The expanded OSHA Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire incorporates work conditions and respirator types
- Board-certified occupational medicine physicians complete the reviews and, when necessary, make recommendations for medical followers:

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"This service is not designed to meet the medical surveillance requirements of substance specific OSHA health standards.



Online Respirator Medical Evaluations

The Importance of Fit Respirator fit is important because it involves several major issues:

- Seal.
- Compatibility.
- Stability.



Tip

A good fit means the respirator will seal to your skin



Each QLFT method uses seven exercises performed for 1 minute each:

- Normal breathing.
- Deep breathing.
- Moving head side to side.
- Moving head up and down.
- Bending over (or jogging in place if fit test unit doesn't permit bending at the waist).
- Talking. (Read poem out loud)
- Normal breathing again.

Be Thankful

Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire, If you did, what would there be to look forward to?

Be thankful when you don't know something For it gives you the opportunity to learn.

> Be thankful for the difficult times. During those times you grow.

Be thankful for each new challenge Because it will build your strength and character.

Be thankful for your limitations Because they give you opportunities for improvement.

Be thankful for your mistakes

They will teach you valuable lessons.

Be thankful when you're tired and weary
Because it means you've made a difference.

It is easy to be thankful for the good things.

A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who are
also thankful for the setbacks.

GRATITUDE can turn a negative into a positive. Find a way to be thankful for your troubles and they can become your blessings.

Author Unknown





Good luck!

We hope you'll find this helpful as you fit test your team and keep Dental Health Care Professionals Safe!

Products mentioned in this presentation is not an endorsement but are just used as examples. We have not financial interests in any of the products mentioned

