How to Clean and Reuse an N95 Mask

How *NOT* to Clean an N95 Mask

To maintain the effectiveness of the mask, *__NEVER__* use these methods:

- Spraying or wetting with aerosol or liquid alcohol.
- Washing in soapy water.

These methods can break down the inherent electrostatic charge that is key to the way an N95 filters small particles. They can reduce a mask's effectiveness by a third to a half.

Method 1: Rotation

A study in the New England Journal of Medicine uses a round robin rotation of masks so that each one is rested for at least 72 hours before being worn again. This relies on the widely held belief that the coronavirus should not survive more than 72 hours on an inhospitable host, like the surface of an N95 mask. The downside to this method is that you need four masks per wearer, and that's assuming you use only a single mask each day.

Method 2: Steaming or Boiling

Submerging an N95 in 125C/260F degree steam or boiling water for 3 minutes will disinfect the mask without significantly reducing its filtration efficiency (FE). Don't excessively stir the mask if you boil it, use only enough manipulation to keep it submerged. If your mask has paper outer and inner layers, neither the steam or boiling methods are advisable as they will disintegrate those paper layers that hold the filter medium between them.

Method 3: Baking

While this method is simple, it assumes you have a second, dedicated oven for this purpose. If not, you run the risk of contaminating your main food preparation oven. Researchers at Michigan State University refined this method using a laboratory oven, and heating a mask for 30 minutes at 70C (160F) is an effective decontamination method.

Information gathered from:

https://www.cnet.com/how-to/how-to-clean-and-reuse-an-n95-mask/

Sources cited:

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