



N95 Respirator Reprocessing

Due to a widespread shortage of personal protective equipment amid the COVID-19 pandemic, several federal agencies (CDC, OSHA, FDA) issued guidance on measures to conserve N95 respirators and Rochester Regional Health has implemented many of them, including:

- Respirator Extended Use – wearing a respirator for an extended time, such as between multiple patients, without removing it.
- Respirator Re-Use – removing a respirator but storing it for further use instead of discarding it.
- Respirator Reprocessing – using an FDA-approved process to sterilize/decontaminate a respirator between additional uses.

What is Respirator Reprocessing?

Respirators suitable for reprocessing can be sealed in a provided Tyvek pouch, labeled, and submitted to sterile supply for processing. Sterile supply will utilize FDA approved Sterrad equipment to process the respirator. After processing the respirator will be returned to its original user. (Refer to the Respirator use FAQ and Respirator Reprocessing procedure for additional details.)

Wet, soiled, or damaged respirators must be discarded rather than submitted for reprocessing.

What re-processing method does RRH use?

Rochester Regional Health uses the FDA approved Sterrad processor to reprocess respirators. RRH chose the Sterrad process because it is an FDA approved process, was evaluated by 3M, NIH, and others, and because we had the equipment readily available.

What respirators can be reprocessed?

The Sterrad process is only compatible with respirators that do not contain cellulose. Additionally reprocessing will only be used with those respirators whose manufacturers have endorsed the reprocessing method or where there is 3rd party evidence that reprocessing is safe and effective. This is currently limited to the 3M 1860, 1860S, 8110S, 8210, and 8210 Plus respirators. Our information will be updated as we learn of more respirators that can be appropriately re-processed.

How many times can respirators be reprocessed?

The respirators and process we use allow them to be reprocessed two times before having to be discarded.



Is reprocessing safe?

We believe that reprocessing is safe and effective. This is based on scientific studies including a published study by the National Institutes for Health (NIH), FDA approval, and the manufacturer's endorsement.

How long will we be reprocessing?

Reprocessing is only recommended as a conservation measure during the COVID-19 state of emergency and while there are respirator shortages. Reprocessing will be suspended when the state of emergency ends or when respirator supplies have stabilized and are no longer under shortage.